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**LANDLORDISM AND TENANCY IN ANCIENT  
AND MEDIEVAL INDIA AS REVEALED  
BY EPIGRAPHICAL RECORDS**



DR. RADHA KUMUD MOOKERJI ENDOWMENT LECTURES  
UNIVERSITY OF LUCKNOW  
1964

# Landlordism and Tenancy in Ancient and Medieval India as Revealed by Epigraphical Records

48173

*By*

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## FOREWORD

The present volume, *Landlordism and Tenancy in Ancient and Medieval India as Revealed by Epigraphical Records*, embodies four Lectures delivered by the eminent Indologist and Epigraphist, Prof. Dinesh Chandra Sircar, at the University of Lucknow in the 'Dr. Radha Kumud Mookerji Endowment Lectures' series in 1964. Though Prof. Sircar is too well known in the world of scholars to merit any introduction, yet a few biographical details—not so much in justice to him as to the feelings of the present writer—may not be out of place here. Born in a middle-class kâyastha family in 1907 near Faridpur (now in <sup>Punjab</sup> East Pakistan), Prof. Sircar was unfortunate to lose his father at the tender age of three. He received his early education at the District school and, after graduating with Honours from the Rajendra College (Faridpur) in 1929, joined the Calcutta University where he capped his brilliant academic career by standing first amongst the first divisioners in Ancient Indian History and Culture in M. A. in 1931. Subsequently, he was associated with the late Prof. D.R. Bhandarkar, and also with Prof. H. C. Raychaudhuri, as a research scholar which associations offered him opportunities for firm grounding in Epigraphy, Palaeography, Numismatics, Ancient Geography as well as political and cultural history of ancient India. Within three years, his studious applications won for him the much-coveted Premchand Roychand Scholarship and, in 1936, he was admitted to the degree of Doctor of Philosophy for his learned dissertation on *The Successors of the Śātavāhanas in the Lower Deccan*. A year later, he became a member of the staff in the Post-Graduate Department of Ancient Indian History and Culture of the same University.

Prof. Sircar's highly learned and informative research-contributions won for him recognition and an honoured place in the galaxy of eminent scholars of Indology. In 1949, he was persuaded by the late Dr. N. P. Chakravarti, the then Director-General of the Archaeological Survey of India, to join the Department where he rose to become the Government



Epigraphist for India in 1955. With an inexhaustible stamina for hard work, he soon brought the *Annual Reports on Indian Epigraphy and Epigraphia Indica* uptodate (contributing about 200 papers in the latter alone), simultancously arranging for the publication of several volumes of the *South Indian Inscriptions* series. In 1961, he returned to Calcutta University to adorn the chair of Carmichael Professor of Ancient Indian History and Culture there, which post he holds to this day.

A prolific writer, Dr. Sircar has more than a dozen published treatises to his credit, while his contributions to the numerous journals and periodicals, both Indian and foreign, run into the formidable number of some 900 papers and notes. Happily for us, their number is still increasing. Fame and honour have come to him quite naturally; he has had the distinction of being deputed by the Government of India to represent the country at conferences abroad and deliver lectures on the Continent including the U. S. S. R. At home, he has presided over the Early Medieval Section of the Indian History Congress, 1946, the History Section of the All-India Oriental Conference, 1957, and twice over the Annual Sessions of the Numismatic Society of India (1955 and 1956). Several Universities, viz., Calcutta, Lucknow, Madras and Magadha, have invited him to deliver Lecture-series, most of which have been published.

## II

In a country whose socio-economic frame-work has been predominantly agrarian from the earliest times, a study of tenancy rights and feudal-ryot relationships in the ancient and medieval periods of her history are of prime importance, as many of their features together with the customs and traditions, sanctified and haloed by age, persist even to this day. These Lectures throw welcome light on the system of land-management, practice and procedure of granting land and villages, rent-free and allied privileged holdings, hereditament, etc., through the evidence of pertinent epigraphs discovered both in the north and south India. Dipping deep into the well of his knowledge, Prof. Sircar has brought to our notice not only the procedure of such grants but also the rights, privileges and advantages permissible to the donees from the State, the king or the grantee, taking, alongside, notice of the burden of taxes and allied obligations on the tenantry. While literary evidence, parti-

cularly of the *Dharmaśāstras*, may be treated as mere recommendatory to the ruler or rulers and sanctification of the prevalent practices and usages in these matters, that of the epigraphs attests to the actual and the current. Assuch, the value of such a study can hardly be over-emphasised.

Thanks are due to two of my former pupils, Sri J.P. Misra, M.A., Head of the Department of Ancient Indian History and Archaeology, Lucknow Christian College, Lucknow, and Shri K. S. Saxena, M. A., Research-scholar, Department of Ancient Indian History and Archaeology, Lucknow University, for their conscientious labours in seeing this book through the press. The Upper India Publishing House, Lucknow, have laid the University of Lucknow under obligation by undertaking the printing of this work with commendable care.

Basant Panchami,  
Jan. 22, 1969.

**R. K. Dikshit,**  
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## INTRODUCTION

I was extremely grateful to the authorities of the University of Lucknow to have invited me, about the beginning of the current year, to deliver a course of lectures under the Dr. Radha Kumud Mookerji Endowment Scheme, especially because this offered me an occasion to pay my homage to the outstanding personality of the late Dr. Mookerji as a great educationist and a front-rank researcher in the field of Indological studies.

I was fully acquainted with Dr. Mookerji's writings since my student days, but had an opportunity of meeting him, for the first time, in December 1938 at the Allahabad Session of the Indian History Congress. He was senior to most of my teachers, and I naturally offered him the respect due to a teacher. But it was about twenty years ago, when I was in my thirties, that Dr. Mookerji had an occasion to express his opinion about myself and, to my great surprise, he wrote about my qualifications and the value of my Research work in superlative terms; and, from that time, I have always felt a deep sense of gratitude towards him.

The subject of my lectures, viz., 'Landlordism and Tenancy in Ancient and Medieval India as revealed by Epigraphical Records', suggested itself to me on the perusal of certain recent writings which are based on a rather inadequate study of the epigraphic data. This is, of course, easily intelligible, the number of inscriptions in the various Indian languages being too many and their interpretation very difficult in many cases. It, therefore, appeared to me worth the while to place my views before scholars for their kind consideration.

Thanks are due to Shri Kalipada Hore, Department of History, Ranaghat College, for preparing a valuable and exhaustive Index.

University of Calcutta

D. C. Sircar



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## CHAPTER I

### LAND AND THE KING

#### 1. Ownership of Land.

In India, the king was theoretically the lord of all land, and the tenants enjoyed the right of building and occupying houses and of cultivating the fields on payment of certain dues to him. But the king's rights in respect of the ownership of land were often relegated, in various degrees, to the vassals, viceroys, fief-holders and privileged tenants, who may thus be regarded as landlords under the primary lord of land, viz., the king.

Strictly speaking, however, there was a difference of opinion between two groups of ancient Indian writers as regards the king's ownership of land. One of these two schools, represented by Jñinini, Śabara and others, held that the State was not the owner of all land, but was only entitled to levy taxes from the holders of the land.<sup>1</sup> The *Vyavahāramayūkha* summarises the views of this school in the following words: "The whole earth cannot be donated by the emperor and a province by a feudatory ruler. The ownership of the various villages and fields in the entire earth or in a province belongs only to the holders of the land, while the kings are entitled to collect taxes only. Therefore, when kings now make what are technically called gifts of fields, no gift of land (i.e. soil) is effected thereby, but only provision is made for the donee's maintenance [out of the taxes, etc., granted by the king in his favour]. But, where houses and fields are purchased [by the king] from their holders, he has also [their] ownership in those cases and, in such cases, he gets the full merit of the gift of land [if it is granted]."<sup>2</sup>

This view emphasises the idea that the king collects taxes in lieu of the protection he offers to the subjects. The reference in the *R̥gveda* to one's field (*urvarā*) being on the same level as his head of hair as a personal

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1. *Pūrvaśākhāśāstra*, VI. 7. 3, and Śabara's commentary thereon. Cf. Kane, *History of Dharmaśāstra*, Vol. II, pp. 865-66.

2. See Kane's ed., p. 91; *Hist. Dharm., op. cit.*, p. 866.



possession' and the *Āitareya Brāhmaṇa* describing the Vaiśya or agriculturist householder as 'tributary to another' (*anyasya bali-kṛt*), 'to be lived upon by another' (*anyasy-ādya*) and 'to be oppressed at will' (*yathākāma-jyeyah*)<sup>2</sup> appear to point to the tenant's ownership of land and to the king's encroachment upon it. The same conception is supported by such works as the *Jātakas* and the *Dharmśāstras*. There is an old tradition which is thus quoted in the *Kautilīya Arthaśāstra*: "People suffering from anarchy, as illustrated by the proverbial tendency of a large fish swallowing a small one, first elected Manu, the son of Vivasvat, to be their king, and allotted one-sixth of the grains grown, one-tenth of the merchandise and a tax in cash as payable to the latter..... Hence hermits, too, provide the king one-sixth of the grains gleaned by them, thinking that it is due to him who protects them."<sup>3</sup>

On the other hand, the second school, even acknowledging the king's responsibility to protect his subjects, lays emphasis on the concept that the king is not only the embodiment of various divinities and a great god in human form, but that he is the lord of the soil—*bhūmer-adhipatir-hi saḥ*.<sup>4</sup> A commentator on the *Kautilīya Arthaśāstra* also says, "Those who are well-versed in the *Śāstras* admit that the king is the owner of both land and water and that the people can exercise their right of ownership over all other things excepting these two."<sup>5</sup> According to Megasthenes, "All India is the property of the crown and no private person is permitted to own land."<sup>6</sup> That, however, this ownership was rather theoretical with reference to the inhabited and cultivated areas of the kingdom is indicated by the

1. VIII. 91.5; *Vedic Index*, Vol. I, p. 99.

2. VII. 29.3; *Vedic Index*, Vol. II, pp. 255-56, 333. The expression *yathākāma-jyeyah* is often supposed to mean that the Vaiśya could be removed from his land without cause (*Vedic Index*, Vol. II, p. 256).

3. Shamasastri's ed., pp. 22-23: *Dhānya-śadbhāgaṁ paṇya-daśabhāgaṁ hiraṇyaṁ e-āśya bhūgaḥṇyaṁ prakāṣayāmāsuḥ*. Shamasastri misunderstood the passage. In the gap in the above-cited section, there is a doubtful part which seems to mean that the sin of the subjects was atoned by the payment of taxes even when no fine was imposed on them by the king.

4. Cf. *Manusmṛti*, VIII. 39; also VII. 7-8. See *Mahābhārata*, XII. 68.40.

5. On II. 20; see Shamasastri's trans., p. 129.

6. Cf. Raychaudhuri, *Pol. Hist. Anc. Ind.*, 1938, p. 240.

fact that the kings were not expected to dispossess the subjects from the landed property in the latter's possession without serious reasons. A well-known story in Kalhaṇa's *Rājatarāṅgiṇī* states how the Kārkoṭa king Candrāpīṭha refused to take away a plot of land belonging to a tanner by force because it was 'another's land' and how he ultimately purchased the plot at the tanner's terms.<sup>1</sup>

Land can be variously classified as cultivable, cultivated, fallow, barren, low, high, hilly, marshy, jungly, etc., etc. There were also land fit for becoming a house-site (*vāṣṭu*), land reclaimed from river-beds (cf. *khajjaṇa*, *pukkoli*, etc.), etc. But from the king's point of view, the land of the country could be divided into the following categories: (1) State land, (2) land in the occupation of tenants who paid the king's dues according to agreed rates, and (3) land in more or less uninhabited and uncultivated areas, over which the effectiveness of State control varied under different circumstances. Each of these categories could be subdivided into different types. Thus State land could be of the following kinds: (1) land attached to the king personally; (2) fields allotted to members of the royal family, officers, subordinates, etc.; (3) land cultivated by State farms, and (4) land cultivated by *ārdhikas* who were temporary tenants receiving half the share of the produce for their labour, and (5) uncultivated and wasteland of various types. Areas more or less uninhabited and uncultivated covered wide parts of a kingdom in ancient times, and it is in such regions that new villages were founded. In the section on the formation of villages, the *Kauṣṭhīya Arthaśāstra* says, "Lands prepared for cultivation shall be given to taxpayers (*karada*) only for life. Unprepared lands shall not be taken away from those who are preparing them for cultivation. Lands may be confiscated from those who do not cultivate them and given to others; or they may be cultivated by the village labourers and traders; or the owners who

1. *Rājatarāṅgiṇī*, IV. 55 ff. Among the Jātaka stories, the *Telaḥatta Jātaka* speaks of a king who admits that he had no complete control over the kingdom and had no power to punish the subjects except rebels and wicked people, while the *Mahāpīṇḍala* and *Gaṇḍatindū Jātakas* describe the atrocities of tyrannical kings, which are acts done according to the principle of might is right and should not be confused with the lawful acts of the kings.

do not properly cultivate them should pay for the loss of the State."<sup>1</sup> The reference seems to be to State land and not to land in the possession of permanent tenants.

## 2. Reclamation of Fallow Land.

The State's eagerness to get the uncultivated fields cultivated and keep lands under cultivation in its own interest is easily intelligible so that the tenant who cultivated the field and paid taxes regularly is scarcely expected to be dispossessed of the plot of land allotted to him for life at the formation of the village. This is because it was not possible for the State to cultivate all freshly acquired or reclaimed land. Not only that. On the tenant's death, it would be quite normal for his son and grandson to get a lease of the same plot of land for the period of their lives successively. And when the land thus remained in the possession of the same family of tax-paying tenants for a few generations, it was generally regarded to be its hereditary possession. According to an old saying quoted in copper-plate grants, "[A plot of land], when it was granted [by the king] with libation of water (i.e. ceremonially), or was enjoyed by three [successive] generations, or when good [tenants] had taken care of it (*sadbhīś-ca pari-pālita*), or when it had been granted by the rulers of earlier ages, cannot be confiscated [by the State]."<sup>2</sup>

The same eagerness on the part of the State allowed a tenant to enjoy, without paying taxes, a plot of uncultivated land, brought by him under cultivation for the first time.<sup>3</sup> The principle is supposed to have been based on the idea that the hunted deer belongs to the person who hit it first. The right of tax-free enjoyment of the land in such cases was logical since the State did not spend any money in the reclamation of the plot, whereas it was sure to get taxes, etc., on the first tenant's death when the question of re-allotting the land to his heir or any other person would come up.

1. II. i.

2. Cf. Sircar, *Indian Epigraphy*, p. 176, verse 1: *adbhir-dattam tribhir-bhuktam sadbhīś-ca paripālita* | *etāni na nivartante pūrva-rāja-kṛtāni ca* ||

The word *paripālana* means 'taking care of one's property' (see Moosier-Williams' *Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, s.v. *paripā*).

3. Cf. Jolly, *Hindu Law and Custom* (trans. B. K. Ghosh), pp. 196-97.

Copper-plate charters often speak of the grant of land as a rent-free holding in accordance with the *bhūmicchidra-nyāya* or the principle of *bhūmicchidra*.<sup>1</sup> The *Kautilya Arthaśāstra* begins its chapter on *bhūmicchidra-vidhāna* (erection of *bhūmicchidra*) with the provision for pasture ground in uncultivated tracts,<sup>2</sup> while the *Vaijayantīkośa* explains *bhūmicchidra* as 'land unfit for cultivation'.<sup>3</sup> If *bhūmicchidra* was thus understood to mean 'waste or fallow land', *bhūmicchidra-nyāya* would be 'the maxim of the waste land', according to which, as indicated above, a person bringing it under cultivation was entitled to enjoy it without payment of taxes. The original meaning of the word *chidra* in *bhūmicchidra-nyāya*, however, may have been 'piercing' (i.e. furrowing in the course of cultivation), so that the *nyāya* seems to have originally referred to 'the cultivation of [waste] land'. But sometimes *chidra* was also understood in the sense of 'a hole, an opening or a gap', and therefore the same principle is mentioned in some cases as *bhūmicchidrapidhāna-nyāya*, 'the maxim of covering up *bhūmicchidra*'.<sup>4</sup> Since a plot of waste land could be regarded as a gap in the cultivated area in one's possession, reclamation of such land might be technically known as 'covering up the gap'. In any case, *bhūmicchidra-nyāya* and *bhūmicchidrapidhāna-nyāya* are both used to indicate the same principle.

When a new territory was conquered and annexed to the kingdom, the State lands therein became the property of the conqueror's State. Thus when the Nasik-Poona region was conquered from the Śakas by Gautamīputra Śātakarṇi (c. 106-30 A.D.) and was annexed to the Śāta-

1. See Bhattacharya, *Kāmarūpaśāsanāvalī*, p. 17; Maitreya, *Gauḍalekhamālā*, pp. 16, 39, 61, 97, 154; Majumdar, *Ins. Beng.*, Vol. III, pp. 5, 21, 63, 74, 87, 96, 102, 112, 125, 137, 148; *Corp. Ins. Ind.*, Vol. III, pp. 138, 170, 190; *ibid.*, Vol. IV, pp. 21, 35, 41, 43, 50, 54, 61, 70, 77, 80, 86, 94, 100, 107, 120, 141, 170.

Vaidyadeva's Kamauli plate has *bhūmicchidrañ-ca a-kiñcit-kara-grāhyam* (*Gauḍalekhamālā*, p. 134).

2. II. 2.

3. *Bhūmi-kāṇḍa*, *Vaiśya-varga*, verse 18.

4. Misra, *Orissa under the Bhauma Kings*, pp. 15, 26, 36, 44, ( 3. In place of *bhūmicchidrapidhāna*, we have also *bhūmicchidrāpidhāna* (*Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXIX, p. 89) and rarely *bhūmicchidravidhāna* which is probably due to scribal error.

vāhana kingdom, the Śātavāhana king described a plot of land in a village in the district of Govardhana (Nasik) as formerly in the possession of the Śaka governor but then his own property,<sup>1</sup> while another plot of land in the suburbs of the city of Govardhana is described as State land belonging to the king himself.<sup>2</sup> The second of the two cases appears to make a distinction between State land and State land attached to the ruler himself.

### 3. Creation of Rent-free Holdings.

According to the *Kautiliya Arthaśāstra*, the performers of sacrifices for the king, his spiritual guide and priest and Brāhmaṇas well-versed in the Vedas should be granted free-holdings (*brahmadeya*) exempted from taxes and fines. It is added that the king's officers should also be endowed with such land though they would have no right to alienate it by sale or mortgage.<sup>3</sup>

Generally speaking, there was no great difference in the position of the vassal and the governor, although rulers of various stages of power and prestige were found in both the categories. Since a qualified son of an

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1. *Select Inscriptions*, p. 192: *khetaṃ Ńjakālakīyaṃ Usabhadālena bhūtaṃ... etā amha-khetu (kṣetram-adyakālahīyam-Rṣabhadallena bhūktam...etad-asmat-kṣetram)*.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 194: *nagara-sīma rājakaṃ khetaṃ amha-satakaṃ (nagara-sīmni rājakaṃ kṣetram-asmat-svatnakam)*.

3. See Shamasastry's trans., pp. 45-46. Cf. Watters, *On Yuan Chwang's Travels in India*, Vol. I, pp. 177. The king appointed separate officers in charge of a single village, of ten villages, of a hundred villages and of a thousand villages. If anything wrong is done in the village, the headman would eradicate it; but in case he is unable to do it, he should report to the ruler of ten villages, who would do the needful. If the officer in charge of ten villages is unable to do the job, he was to request the ruler of a hundred villages to take action in the matter. But if that officer also fails to do anything, he should report to the ruler of a thousand villages, who will by all means have to do whatever is required. See *Viṣṇusmṛti*, III. 5-8. Manu (VII. 115-19) includes the lord of twenty villages in the chain and adds that whatever is payable by the villagers to the king in the shape of food, drink, fuel, etc., should be paid to the village headman, while the rulers of ten, twenty, hundred and thousand villages would enjoy one *kula* of land, five *kulas*, a village and a township respectively.

officer was often installed in the father's position on the latter's death, the territory under a governor would be practically under a vassal during the rule of his son or grandson. When the governor or a small vassal chief wanted to create a rent-free holding in favour of a Brāhmaṇa or a deity, he applied to the king and apparently paid the price of the land in question at least on a theoretical basis. In such a transaction, it was believed, according to an old Indian convention, that five-sixths of the religious merit for the pious act would go to the purchaser of the land and one-sixth<sup>1</sup> of it to the king whose government alone could create a rent-free holding. If the State did not receive any compensation for the loss of revenue, the entire merit accruing to the donation was believed to go to the king. Without clearly referring to the sale in such cases, many charters state that a particular tax-free holding was created by the king at the request of a subordinate. But the subordinate's name was mentioned in a royal charter in this way only when he was considered to be of some importance. When he grew more powerful, he issued charters himself stating that he had received the permission of the king for the creation of the holding. With further growth in his power, his charters were issued without reference to the king's permission, but without concealing his subordinate position, or indicating it somewhat vaguely. When still more powerful, he issued his grants without any reference to the king and sometimes endowing himself with a combination of subordinate and imperial titles, which could in some cases be so interpreted as to signify either his subordinate position or an independent status. The final stage was, of course, represented by his charters issued as a full-fledged independent ruler.<sup>2</sup> In this way, a landlord became ultimately transformed into a king.

As regards the land made a rent-free holding at the request of subordinates, it was generally lying within their fief or estate. In the case of land

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1. The king's share of the merit was equal to his share of the produce of the tenants' fields.

2. For these points, cf. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXXIII, p. 50. See also *Select Inscriptions*, pp. 331, 344, 348, 353 (notes), 362, 375, 421; *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXII, pp. 139 ff.; Vol. XXVII, p. 329; Vol. XXVIII, pp. 109, 201, 266, 284, 332; Vol. XXIX, p. 185; Vol. XXX, p. 139.

forming part of fiefs which royal officers of ancient India and members of the royal family usually enjoyed temporarily, their occupants lost the taxes from the land in question so long as they were in its possession; but the State's loss of revenue was greater since the land normally remained rent-free even when the estate in which it was situated reverted to it or was subsequently allotted to some other officer. That is why fief-holders had to compensate the State's loss at least partially for the creation of revenue-free holdings within the fiefs as otherwise they could scarcely expect the full religious merit accruing to the pious act. There are cases where a king is found to ratify the rent-free holdings created in their fiefs by officers and members of the royal family.<sup>1</sup>

It appears that a number of the grants of rent-free land issued by the kings were really made on behalf of persons whose names are not mentioned in the documents. In a few cases, even though the grant is recorded in the king's name, an endorsement at the end of the document says that it was made by an individual, and, in reality, there is a contradiction between the fact as stated in the charter proper and the endorsement. It also appears that there was an amount of reluctance on the part of the State to admit the fact that a grant was really made after receiving money from a party. In a few cases, the real fact is indicated in a vague way, sometimes by introducing a person without any ostensible relation with a charter stated to have been granted by the king. In this connection, reference may be made to the epithet *dāpaka* applied to a person in a number of Paramāra charters. The word is generally understood by scholars in the sense of *dūtaka* or the executor of a grant. Since, however, the epithets *dāpaka* and *dūta* are sometimes applied to the same person in the same context,<sup>2</sup> it is possible to think that the word *dāpaka* indicated the real donor of the grant which was ratified by the king.<sup>3</sup>

Some copper-plate charters of the Gupta age record the sale of exten-

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1. See *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXX pp. 50-51; cf. the Vaṅḡiya Sālūṭiya Pariṣad plate of Viśvarūpasena (*Majumdar, Ins. Beng.*, Vol. III, p. 147; *JAS*, Letters, Vol. XX, pp. 206-07).

2. Cf. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXII, p. 76, verse 39.

3. For a discussion on the problem, see Sircar, *Indian Epigraphy*, pp. 114 ff.

sive plots of State land in Bengal to any applicant paying the usual price and the State's acceptance of his proposal to create a rent-free holding out of the purchased area in favour of Brāhmaṇas or religious institutions.<sup>1</sup> For the creation of such rent-free holdings, a person had to apply to the district authorities, and the record-keepers attached to the board of administration had to certify about the availability of land at the price offered by the applicant. The price was then accepted and the creation of the holding was sanctioned. In these cases, the land was mostly of the *khila* (fallow land which had been previously cultivated) and *aprahata* (waste land that had not been previously cultivated) categories, and the State's interest in its disposal at a cheap rate is intelligible. The donees of such charters became landlords, and their interest lay in the development of the area by founding habitations, markets, etc., and arranging for the cultivation of the fields. With the development of such an area, the neighbouring regions were easier for the State to develop. Moreover, when a landlord died without leaving an heir or when he committed a crime like rebellion against the State, the whole estate was expected to revert to the State.

#### 4. Confiscation of Landed Property.

That escheat property reverted to the State is clearly indicated by many charters in which the privilege of appropriating such property within his estate was specifically granted to the donee.<sup>2</sup>

There were other recognised ways of resuming gift lands without blemish. A fifth century copper-plate grant of king Pravarasena II of the Vākāṭaka dynasty of Berar has the following passage: "And this condition of the charter should be maintained by the Brāhmaṇas (*i.e.* the donees) and by the rulers, namely that [the donees should enjoy the donated estate] as long as the moon and the sun endure, provided that they do not rise in rebellion (*a-droha-pravṛtta*) against the State which is an aggregate of seven constituent elements (*viz.*, the king, the ministers, the allies, the territory, the fortresses, the army and the treasury), that they are on hostile terms

1. *Select Inscriptions*, pp. 337 ff., 342 ff., 346 ff., 350 ff., 359 ff.

2. Cf. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXVIII, p. 291 and note 13.



(*saṅgrāmaṁ kurvalām*) with the slayers of Brāhmaṇas and with the robbers, adulterers and traitors to the king (*rāj-āpathya-kārin*) and that they do no wrong to the other villages. But, if they act otherwise or assent [to such acts], the king will commit no theft in confiscating the estate."<sup>1</sup>

A similar condition is noticed in the Purushottampuri plates of the Yādava king Rāmacandra (1271-1311 A.D.), in which it is stated that the gift land should not be sold or mortgaged by the donees who should follow the right course of action, that prostitutes should not be given quarters there, that the donees should not form into an armed band and that gambling should not be permitted in the estate. If these conditions were not violated, then only the donees and their descendants were entitled to enjoy the estate permanently.<sup>2</sup>

The confiscation of a village in the possession of Rājā Nāgapāla by the Caulukya king Bhīma of Gujarat, because the former rose in rebellion against the latter, is referred to in a document (dated 1231 A.D.) quoted in the *Lekhapaddhati*.<sup>3</sup>

Although it is quite clear from epigraphic and literary records that pious kings of India generally respected the rent-free holdings created by earlier rulers either of their own family or of other dynasties, a significant fact revealed by the copper-plate grants is the persistent fear of the donors that their gifts might be resumed by the future rulers of their own families or other royal families. This clearly establishes the fact that resumption of rent-free holdings or collection of taxes from them by the rulers was a far from uncommon feature in the administration of those days. The donors are therefore often found to request their successors to be so good as to preserve the gifts and usually quoted certain old stanzas declaring the virtue accruing to the gift of land and its preservation as well as the great sin resulting from the confiscation or resumption of gift lands. Thus in some records we have, "And those kings who shall be born in our lineage—by them this grant should not be confiscated, but should be assented to; and the customary dues payable to the king should not be taken. And

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1. Cf. *Select Inscriptions*, p. 424, note 2. Fleet misunderstood the passage (*Corp. Ins. Ind.*, Vol. III, p. 242). Cf. confiscation called a case of theft.

2. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXV, p. 218; Sircar, *Indian Epigraphy*, p. 140.

3. A.K. Majumdar, *The Caulukyas of Gujarat*, pp. 245-46.

whosoever may confiscate the grant, he shall become invested with the guilt of the five great sins and the minor sins. And it has been said in the *Mahābhārata* by the Venerable Vyāsa, 'O Yudhiṣṭhira, the best of kings, carefully preserve land that has been given whether by thyself or by another; verily, the preservation of a grant is more meritorious than making a grant'...";<sup>1</sup> "And this our gift should be assented to and preserved by future kings, born in our lineage, bearing in mind that riches do not endure for ever, that the life of man is uncertain and that the reward of a gift of land belongs in common both to him who makes it and to him who continues it, and he shall become invested with the guilt of the five great sins, together with the minor sins, who may confiscate this grant or assent to its confiscation. And it has been said by the Venerable Vyāsa, the arranger of the Vedas, 'The giver of land abides in heaven for sixty thousand years; but the confiscator of a grant and he who assents to an act of confiscation shall dwell for the same number of years in hell'...";<sup>2</sup> "And he (the donor) enjoins upon future kings—"The ancients whose minds were fixed upon religion say that the virtue that arises from the preservation of a grant is greater than that which arises from making a grant; therefore your mind should verily incline to preserve land that has been given to a Brāhmaṇa of very pure family and holy learning. Therefore this gift should be preserved by you also. And they cite on this point the verses that were sung by Vyāsa.....";<sup>3</sup> etc.

##### 5. Reclamation of Fallow Land in the Rent-Free Estates.

The learned Brāhmaṇas and temple authorities of ancient India contributed very considerably to the reclamation of fallow or waste land in different kingdoms, because it was they who mostly received free gifts of rent-free holdings from the kings and became landlords thereby. A learned Brāhmaṇa of any area of the country was held in high esteem at the royal court in any other part. But the Brāhmaṇas of such centres of learning in U.P. as Kānyakubja, Kolāṅka (Kroḍāṅka), Śrāvastī and Mukṭāvastu were specially honoured by the people in Eastern India, particularly in North

1. *Corp. Ins. Ind.*, Vol. III, pp. 118-19.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 167.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 194.

Bihar and Bengal. There is evidence to show that the settlement of a large number of Śrāvastī Brāhmaṇas in the jungle areas about the present Hili-Balughat region of North Bengal led to the change of its old name of Pāluniyojana to Śrāvastī.<sup>1</sup> The Bangaon plate of king Vīrahnāpāla III (eleventh century A.D.) suggests how the local Brāhmaṇas of North Bihar proudly traced their descent from distant U.P. ancestors, even through women in the chain, and how they were eager to settle U.P. Brāhmaṇas comfortably in their region by giving their daughters in marriage to the latter.<sup>2</sup> A Brāhmaṇa officer of Vīrahnāpāla III, who had some Kolāñca blood in his veins, arranged for the creation of a rent-free estate in his own fief in favour of another Brāhmaṇa from Kolāñca. Indeed, the above facts revealed by the Bangaon plate lie at the root of the development of the custom of preserving genealogical accounts (*kula-pañji*) and of the social institution known as Kulīnis in North Bihar and Bengal.

Sometimes even copper-plate inscriptions recording the sale of a plot of land and the amount to be paid annually by the purchaser contain the quotation of old stanzas praising the gift of land and deprecating its resumption.<sup>3</sup> This is because, according to an ancient Indian convention referred to in the *Mitākṣarā*, the sale of land had also to be represented as a gift.<sup>4</sup> The *Lekhapaddhati* shows that some of the privileges attached to rent-free land were mentioned in the documents of medieval Gujarat, even when a house was sold, while, during Marāṭhā rule in Western India, land-grants generally referred to the right over *jala-taru-tṛṇa-kāṣṭha-pāṣāṇa-nidhi-nikṣēpa* often noticed in early records as we shall see later on. The Indo-British courts decided that these expressions conferred on the grantee the ownership of the soil and that their absence from the document might indicate that the grant related only to the revenue income.<sup>5</sup>

1. See *Ind. Hist. Quart.*, Vol. XXXVI, pp. 194 ff.

2. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXIX, pp. 48 ff.

3. Cf. *ibid.*, Vol. XXVIII, pp. 44 ff.

4. See the *Mitākṣarā* commentary on the *Yājñavalkya-smṛti*, II. 114: *sthāvarasya vikraya-pratiśedhāt...dāna-prasāhāc-ca vikraye-'pi kartavye sa-hiranyam-udakam datvā dāna-rūpeṇa sthāvare-vikrayam kuryāt*.

5. A.K. Majumdar, *op. cit.*, p. 248; *Lekhapaddhati*, p. 35; Kane, *History of Dharmaśāstra*, Vol. II, Part ii, p. 865.

6. *Bali and Bhāga.*

We have seen above how Vaivasvata Manu, the first king, was allotted one-sixth share of the grains, one-tenth share of the articles for sale and a tax in cash, according to a tradition recorded in the *Kauṭīliya Arthaśāstra*. According to Megasthenes, the husbandmen of Maurya India paid a fourth part of the produce of the soil and also a land tribute apparently in cash, other important State dues mentioned by him being tribute and prescribed services from traders and cattle from herdsmen and the birth and death taxes, fines and tithes on sale in the urban areas,<sup>1</sup> although Indian sources generally speak of the king's grain-share to be one-sixth and not one-fourth.

That the principal sources of State revenue were the land-tax and the grain-share is also suggested by the earliest epigraphical records of India. Although the *Amarakaṣa* (about the sixth century A. D.) regards the words *kara*, *bali* and *bhāga* (*bhāgaadheya*) as synonymous, there is no doubt that once *bali* and *bhāga* were considered to be different types of *kara* which indicated 'revenue in general'. Thus the Ruinmidei pillar inscription<sup>2</sup> of Aśoka (c. 272-232 B. C.) and the Junagadh inscription<sup>3</sup> (150 A. D.) of Rudradāman make a clear distinction between *bali* and *bhāga*. The Buddhist king Aśoka visited Lumbinī-grāma, the birth-place of the Buddha, on pilgrimage and, on that occasion, granted the holy place (i.e. the people of the locality) freedom from the payment of *bali* (*udbalika*) and the privilege of paying the *bhāga* at the concession rate of one-eighth (*āṣṭa-bhāgika*). The word *bhāga*, of course, means the king's grain-share which was normally much higher than one-eighth. The *bali* that was abolished from Lumbinī-grāma was apparently the land-tax mentioned by Megasthenes and the tax in cash referred to in the *Kauṭīliya Arthaśā-*

1. Raychaudhuri, *Pol. Hist. Anc. Ind.*, 1938, pp. 240-41; Sircar, *Indian Epigraphy*, p. 389, note 2.

2. *Select Inscriptions*, p. 70 : *hida Bhagavān jāte ti Lumbini-gāma ubalike kaṭe aṭha-bhāgiye ca (iha Bhagavān jātaḥ iti Lumbinī-grāmaḥ udbalikah kṛtaḥ āṣṭa-bhāgikah ca)*.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 173 : *yathāvat-prāptair-bali-śulka-bhāgeiḥ kṛ(ka)naka-rajata-vajra-vaidūrya-ratn-opacaya-viśvayandamāna-koṣeṣa* ; cf. p. 174 : *apīdayitvā kara-viṣṭi-praṇayakriyābhikṣu-paura-jānapadam janam*.

*śra*. This tax appears to have been levied from homestead land, orchards, etc., and probably in lieu of *bhāga* with reference to particular crops. One passage in the Junagadh inscription enumerates the State's dues from the subjects as *kara* (taxes in general), *viṣṭi* (unpaid labour) and *praṇayakriyā* (benevolence or emergency impost), while another passage mentions the items of the king's revenue income as *bali* (land-tax), *śulka* (tolls, etc.) and *bhāga* (share of the produce of the fields). It is significant that the word *kara* (taxes in general) has not been mentioned in the second passage apparently because *bali*, *śulka* and *bhāga* were three of its different types.<sup>1</sup>

The word *bali* originally meant 'the offering to a deity' as well as 'the tribute to a king'. It was therefore, at first, whatever a king received or exacted from his subjects as also from the subdued rulers or peoples, the contributions of the subjects gradually developing into fixed taxes payable regularly for a definite period. At the same time, the name *bhāga* (literally, 'a share') was becoming popular in the sense of the portion of the produce of the fields to be paid by the tenants to the king, the proportion being soon standardised. *Bhāga* therefore seems to have been originally the principal part of *bali* though it gradually developed a distinct meaning.<sup>2</sup> This is why *bali* and *bhāga* were usually regarded as synonyms even in later works. But *bali* is conspicuous by its absence in later epigraphical records except in Tamil inscriptions which speak of land, granted rent-free for the performance of services, as *umbāṭika* (also found

1. As to the obligation of the artisans and other workers to offer free service to the king for one day in the month, Manu (VII. 138) has—*Kārukān śilpināḥ-c-aiva Śūdrānāḥ-c-ātmopajīvināḥ | ekaikaṁ kārayet karma māsi māsi mahāpateḥ ||* while Viṣṇu says, *śilpināḥ karma-jīvināḥ-ca Śūdrāḥ-ca māsen-aikān rājāḥ karma kuryuḥ*.

2. It is sometimes wrongly supposed that, in the Rummindei pillar edict and the Junagadh inscription, the word *bhāga* (the king's share of the produce) is distinguished not only from *bali* but also from *kara* (Ghoshal, *Hindu Revenue System*, p. 290).

3. Cf. *Vedic Index*, Vol. II, p. 62.

4. *Bhāgadugha* of the early Vedic texts literally means 'the distributor of shares'. Cf. *Vedic Index*, Vol. II, pp. 100, 200. His duty seems to have been to collect taxes in kind and to distribute the grains among the king's different granaries or among the king and his dependants.

as *umbajam* and *umbalikkai*)<sup>1</sup> standing for Sanskrit *udbalika* mentioned in the Rummindei inscription.

The absence of *bali* in later Sanskrit inscriptions is no doubt due to the fact that the conception of *bali*, as distinguished from *bhāga*, was signified thereby by other technical words. Thus an inscription of the Śātavāhana king Puṣumāvi (c. 130-59 A. D.) speaks of *dēya* (what has to be offered or paid in cash) and *mēya* (what has to be measured).<sup>2</sup> Of the two items, *mēya* seems to be the same as *bhāga* or the king's grain-share, while *dēya* or dues would be either the same as *bali* or the periodical offerings later called *bhoga*.

The charters of the kings of Śarabhapura, who ruled in the fifth and sixth centuries A. D., often mention only *bhoga-bhāga* as the dues payable by the tenants to the king.<sup>3</sup> These two words are found in many copper-plate grants, and, while *bhāga* is understood in the sense of the king's grain-share, *bhoga* is taken to mean periodical offerings. It is difficult to explain the absence of *bali* here unless of course it is the same as *bhoga*. But, in the copper-plate grants of the kings of Uccakalpa, who also flourished in the same area in the same age, viz., the last quarter of the fifth century A. D. as well as in the first half of the sixth, the king's receipts from the tenants are enumerated as (1) *rāja-bhāvyā-kara-pratyāya*,<sup>4</sup> (2) *bhāga-bhoga-kara-pratyāya*,<sup>5</sup> (3) *bhāga-bhoga-kara-hiraṇyādi-pratyāya*,<sup>6</sup> (4) *śulka-bhāga-bhoga-kara-hiraṇyādi-pratyāya*,<sup>7</sup> (5) *bhāga-bhoga-kara-hiraṇyāvāt-ādi-pratyāya*,<sup>8</sup> etc. In the first of these instances, reference is made to *kara* and *pratyāya* payable to the king in future, so that *kara* and *pratyāya* seem to be distinguished. *Kara-pratyāya* may also mean 'income in the shape of *kara*.' The suggestion is probably supported by the mention of *rāja-bhogya-kara-hiraṇyā-pratyāya*, possibly meaning the income (*pratyāya*) enjoyed by

1. See T. N. Subramanian, *South Indian Temple Inscriptions*, Vol. III, Part ii, Glossary, p. lxxxiii.

2. *Select Inscriptions*, p. 195.

3. *Corp. Ins. Ind.*, Vol. III, pp. 194, 198.

4. *Ibid.*, pp. 133, 137.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 118.

6. *Ibid.*, pp. 127, 131.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 122.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 137.

the king in the shape of *kara* and *hiraṇya* in records like the Naihati plate of the Sena king Ballālasena (c. 1159-79 A. D.) of Bengal.<sup>1</sup> The second and third instances appear to speak of *kara* in the shape of *bhāga* and *bhoga*, to which *śulka* is added in the fourth instance, while the third and fourth instances appear to mention *pratyāya* including *hiraṇya* and other items, to which the fifth instance adds *āvāt-āya*. There is no question here of a gradual increase in the number of levies. The difference is due to the difference in the extent of royal favour to the various donees.

The word *kara*, from the root *kr* or *kṛ*, 'to injure or kill', means 'revenue or taxes in general' which the tenants considered to be an oppressive burden, while *pratyāya* is the same as *āya*, 'income or revenue', so that the two are essentially the same. But, in technically distinguishing them, epigraphical records referred to above probably include *śulka* (tolls), *bhāga* (grain share) and *bhoga* (periodical offerings) in *kara*, though *hiraṇya* (revenue payable in cash) and *āvāt-āya* (income resulting from the effects of storms) are included in *pratyāya*. *Bali*, in such cases, may have been indicated by *pratyāya* or *hiraṇya*.

A similar modification in the significance of *bhāga* also is sometimes noticed in later records. Thus the Alina plates<sup>2</sup> of a Maltraka king, dated in 766 A. D., record the gift of a village together with privileges including *bhoga-bhāga* and *dhānya-hiraṇya-ādeya*. Since the word *dhānya* means 'grains', it is difficult to distinguish it from *bhāga* or the king's share of the grains. It is, however, probable to think that *dhānya*, distinguished from *bhāga* as in the case cited above, meant not the king's share of the produce but the small contributions in grains made by the tenants for the maintenance of royal officials such as the village watchman, the village headman (modern *Patel*) and the accountant-clerk (modern *Patvārī*) assisting the headman in realising the king's dues from the villagers. Various kinds of exactions of this nature are known from early medieval inscriptions as we shall see in the course of these lectures. But the difficulty is that, in some cases, only *dhānya-hiraṇya-ātlāna* is mentioned and *bhoga-bhāga* is absent<sup>3</sup> and that, in such cases, *dhānya* and *hiraṇya* have probably to be understood

1. *Ins. Beng.*, Vol. III, p. 74.

2. *Corp. Ins. Ind.*, Vol. III, p. 179.

3. See Gadre, *Important Inscriptions from the Baroda State*, Vol. I, p. 23.

respectively in the sense of *bhāga* and *bali*. That *dhānya* indicated the same thing as *bhāga* is also suggested by the Basim plates of Vindhyaśakti II, which mention *hiranya*, *dhānya* and *pranaya* together.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, some records include *tulya-meya* in the list of *pratyāyas* along with *bhāga-bhoga-hiranya*, and here *tulya-meya* may mean tolls on commodities sold in the markets.<sup>2</sup>

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1. *Select Inscriptions*, pp. 406-09.

2. Sircar, *Indian Epigraphy*, p. 394.



## CHAPTER II

### LAND AND THE LANDLORDS

#### 1. *Ownership of Trees.*

Particular trees in the land under the occupation of tenants were regarded as belonging to the State. There were also other items such as shrubs, etc., which the ordinary tenants were not allowed to appropriate. The privilege to enjoy them was often granted or sold to the tenants.

It is well known to the student of Indian epigraphy that many of the copper-plate charters of North Indian rulers of the early medieval period, such as the Pālas of Bengal and Bihar, record the grant of revenue-free land together with the right to enjoy the fruits of mango and mahua trees, this particular privilege being denied to an ordinary tenant.<sup>1</sup> The charters of the rulers of East Bengal like the kings of the Candra and Varman dynasties mention the mango and jack trees in place of mango and mahua, that part of the country producing no mahua at all.<sup>2</sup> But the Barraekpur plate of Vijayasena shows that the monopoly of the king and the landlord not only covered the mango and jack trees but extended to the arecanut and coconut palms,<sup>3</sup> while the grants of his son and grandson mention only arecanut and coconut palms and not any other tree,<sup>4</sup> so that mango and jack trees were not considered the royal monopoly at least in particular areas or in special cases. The Ramganj plate of Īśvaraghoṣa shows that mango was regarded as a monopoly in some parts of Bengal, even during the age of the Senas.<sup>5</sup> The Vaṅgīya Sāhitya Pariṣad plate of Viśvarūpasena, who flourished in the first quarter of the thirteenth century in Eastern Bengal, offers us an interesting case of a person acquiring ten-

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1. Cf. *Gauḍalekhamālā*, pp. 39, 61, 97, 154.

2. *Ins. Beng.*, Vol. III, pp. 5, 21.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 63.

4. *Ibid.*, pp. 74, 87, 90, 102, 112, 125, 137, 147.

5. *Ibid.*, pp. 153-54. Majumdar's attempt to include mahua in the passage is due to misunderstanding.

ancy right over a plot of land by purchase and the landlord's or privileged tenant's right over the same land being conferred on him by the king by making it a rent-free holding.<sup>1</sup>

A section of the Vaṅḡiya Sāhitya Pariṣad plate speaks of a big piece of land, measuring 165 *udānas*<sup>2</sup> and yielding the annual revenue income of 100 *purāṇas* (equivalent to 128000 cowrie-shells),<sup>3</sup> which was attached to the *paṭṭolī* and had been purchased by *Paṇḍita* Halāyudha from certain tenants named Śauvasā, Kirito, Maito, Ucehoka and others who were in possession of different plots of the area in question. The word *paṭṭolī* primarily meant 'a deed of purchase', though it is sometimes used to indicate 'land purchased and owned by virtue of a *paṭṭolī*' exactly as in the case of *lāmra*, *śāsana* or *lāmra-śāsana* which meant both 'a copper-plate charter' and 'land held as a free-holding by virtue of a copper-plate grant'.<sup>4</sup> The said piece of land, the boundaries of which were fixed and well known, was situated in the village of Ajikulāpāṅka in the small administrative unit (*caturaka*) of Navasaṅgraha which formed part of the bigger unit (*deṣṭī*) of Madhukṣiraka. The Sena king is stated to have granted the land in favour of Halāyudha as a *śāsana* or free-holding. It will be seen that the donee had already been in possession of the land as an ordinary tenant, so that the king now merely made it a rent-free estate and the tenant became a landlord or privileged tenant. As the holder of a *paṭṭolī* he had to pay taxes; but he no longer remained under that obligation as the holder of a *śāsana*.

It is further stated in the same section of the inscription that, along with the above piece of land, was granted to Halāyudha a *kalana* (apparently meaning 'an arecanut plantation') situated on the *vāstu* (homestead land) portion of it. The produce of this plantation is stated to have been

1. See *ibid.*, pp. 140 ff., 177 ff.; also *Journ. As. Soc.*, Letters, Vol. XX, p. 205.

2. Cf. Sircar, *Indian Epigraphy*, p. 416, for this land measure, the exact area of which cannot be determined.

3. This was the popular silver coin of early medieval India, also called *dharāṇa*, *kārṣāpaṇa* (*kāhaṇ*), *rūpaka* and *dramma*. Its theoretical weight was 24 *ratīs*, though it weighed less actually. According to Bhāskarācārya's *Līlāvatī* and the arithmetical tables of medieval Bengal, it was equal to 1280 cowrie-shells.

4. *Indian Epigraphy*, pp. 103-04.

3000 betelnuts per annum, the price of which was calculated to be an annual income of 40 *purāṇas*, i.e. at the rate of 75 nuts per *purāṇa* equivalent to 1280 cowrie-shells, each nut being valued at the high price of about 17 cowries. It has to be noticed that the rent-paying holders of the land, from whom Halāyudha purchased it, did not own the betelnut plantation, because its possession was a monopoly of kings and landlords. When Halāyudha became the landlord by securing the land from the king as a free-holding, the right of ownership of the plantation had to be automatically made over to him.

Halāyudha's annual income from the said piece of land was thus 100 plus 40 *purāṇas* = 140 *purāṇas*. The small revenue income of 100 silver coins (equivalent to 128000 cowrie-shells) per annum is explained in the epigraph by stating that the area was in ruins, i.e. was depopulated (Sanskrit *utsanna*, Bengali *ucchanna*). Elsewhere, the charter says that the donee and his descendants such as sons, grandsons and others had the right to enjoy the land at their pleasure by causing on them the erection of temples, excavation of tanks, plantation of betelnut, coconut and other plants and trees and similar other works which were apparently not possible for rent-paying tenants to do without special permission of the State.

Another section of the Vaṅḡya Sāhitya Paṇḍita plate speaks of a plot of land (measuring 25 *udānas* and yielding 50 *purāṇas* per annum) in the village of Deulahastī within the Lāuhapḍā-caturaka which is stated to have belonged to the State and attached to the king (*rāja-hita*),<sup>1</sup> but was held jointly (cf. *vāra*) by the tenants Aranto, Kāmya, Piṇṭhanāga and others, from whom Paṇḍita Halāyudha secured it as a *paṭṭolī* by purchase. This plot was also made a rent-free holding in favour of Halāyudha by the king.<sup>2</sup>

As regards trees which were State monopoly, Orissan records sometimes speak of mango and mahua<sup>3</sup> and also of the tamarind tree and palm-*yra* palm besides containing vague reference to woods (*araṇya*), shrubs (*gulma*), trees (*vṛkṣa*), creepers (*latā*), branches (*viṭapa*) etc.<sup>4</sup> Some of them

1. The same type of State land has probably been called *rāja-sambhoga* in the Manahali plate (*Gaudalekhamālā*, p. 154).

2. See *Journ. As. Soc.*, Letters, Vol. XX, pp. 203-04.

3. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXVIII, pp. 325, 327.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 327; cf. pp. 66-67, 291, etc.

mention various trees including *sīsū*, *madhūka* and *tāla*.<sup>1</sup> The Candella records often include, besides mango and *mnhna*, such other plants as *asana*, sugarcane, safflower, cotton plant and hemp and deposits of grass and leaves (or grass-fields and betel-leaf plantations).<sup>2</sup> Sometimes early inscriptions of South India mention grass and wood as well as myrobalan, vegetables and flowers in the list of privileges granted to the landlords.<sup>3</sup> Shrubs and branches (*jhāṭa-viṭapa*)<sup>4</sup> generally and jungles (*vana*) occasionally are also included in the list of royal monopolies in the copper-plate grants of the Senn kings of Bengal.<sup>5</sup> In a few cases, shrubs and branches are mentioned in the same context in the Inscriptions of the Pālas as well.<sup>6</sup> The reference to branches is interesting in view of the fact that the tenants, or at least a class of them, were not entitled to appropriate even the branch of a tree brought down by storms. It is difficult to say, without further light on the subject, whether the tenants enjoyed better rights in the earlier ages and these records of the early medieval period point to a curtailment in the tenancy rights. But probably the same state of things also prevailed in the earlier periods. This is suggested by some South Indian epigraphs referring to *kāṣṭha* or fuel, to which reference has been made above.

## 2. King's Share of Grains.

We have seen how the king's share was one-fourth of the produce according to Megasthenes, but one-sixth according to early Indian authorities, and how it was less than one-eighth which was a concession rate according to the Rummidei pillar inscription of Aśoka. There was probably no unanimity about the proportion of the king's share which may have been more or less according to the quality of the soil and the crops it

1. *JBORS*, Vol. XVII, pp. 1 ff.; Sircar, *Indian Epigraphy*, p. 401.

2. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXXII, p. 122.

3. *Select Inscriptions*, 1942, p. 439.

4. The expression *jhāṭa-viṭapa* is often taken to mean 'various kinds of shrubs'. But, in the Orissan epigraph cited above, *viṭapa* and *gulma* are mentioned separately, and, if *gulma* is 'a shrub', *viṭapa* means more plausibly 'a branch'.

5. Cf. *Ins. Beng.*, Vol. III, pp. 63, 74, 87, 96, etc. The Ramganj plate has 'trees, grass, branches and creepers' (*ibid.*, p. 154).

6. *Gaudālekhamālā*, p. 154.

produced. Thus the *Manusmṛiti*<sup>1</sup> prescribes one-sixth, one-eighth or one-twelfth as the king's share of the grains (*dhānya*). But one-sixth seems to have been a well-recognised normal standard for the staple crops. This is probably indicated by the early Indian convention regarding the king getting one-sixth of the merit for creating a rent-free holding in favour of gods and Brāhmaṇas out of State land sold to a party, as revealed by epigraphic records like the Mallasarui plate.<sup>2</sup>

In this connection, it is interesting to note that East Indian records<sup>3</sup> sometimes mention a royal officer entitled *Ṣaṣṭhādhipāṇika*, literally 'the superintendent of the one-sixth (i.e. the one-sixth share)', who was undoubtedly the officer in charge of the collection of the royal share of the produce of the fields under the tenants. The same officer is probably mentioned in the inscriptions of the Kathiawar region as *Dhruvādhipāṇika* literally, 'the superintendent of the office in charge of the fixed (i.e. the fixed share)', and it has been pointed out that *Dhruva*, no doubt a contraction of *Dhruvādhipāṇika*, is still used in the said region to denote 'a person who, on the part of a Rāja, superintends the collection of the royal share of the produce which is made by the farmers of revenue'.<sup>4</sup> The word *dhruva* (fixed), however, seems to suggest that there was not a single rate, but that different rates for different types of fields, crops or tenants were fixed by the State in the area in question. It may be pointed out that the *Dhruvādhipāṇika* seems sometimes also to be called *Dhruvasthānādhipāṇika*,<sup>5</sup> i.e.

1. VII. 130. Manu further prescribes  $\frac{1}{8}$  of animals and gold (or coins) and  $\frac{1}{8}$  of wood (or trees), meat, honey and many other articles. According to the *Viṣṇusmṛiti* (III. 10 ff.), the king should collect, on account of *baḥi*,  $\frac{1}{8}$  out of paddy and other crops, 2% out of animals, gold (or coins) and cloth,  $\frac{1}{8}$  out of meat, honey, clarified butter and various other items,  $\frac{1}{10}$  out of the articles made in his own kingdom and  $\frac{1}{20}$  out of articles made in other countries. (Cf. Watters, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 176).

2. *Select Inscriptions*, p. 362, text line 11; cf. *lapaḥ-ṣaḍ-bhāga* referred to in the *Abhijñānaśakuntala*, Act II, verse 13. According to the *Viṣṇusmṛiti* (III. 13-14), the king should not levy taxes from the Brāhmaṇas because he shares the latter's religious merit and enjoys  $\frac{1}{6}$  of the pious and sinful acts of the subjects.

3. *Gauḍalekhamāḍā*, p. 16, text lines 44-45.

4. *Corp. Ins. Ind.*, Vol. III, p. 170, note.

5. Cf. *Select Inscriptions*, 1942, p. 404.

the superintendent of the office in charge of the place where the *dhrva* was preserved, probably meaning the king's threshing floors and granaries. Thus the officer may have been in charge of both the collection and storing of the king's grain share.

As regards the tenants' obligations to the local administrators, the *Manusmṛiti*<sup>1</sup> offers us an interesting information. According to this, the king appointed a *Grāmika* or headman over each village, a 'lord of ten' over each unit of ten villages and likewise 'lords of twenty, hundred and thousand' respectively over units of twenty, hundred and thousand villages. As regards remuneration, the lords of thousand, hundred, twenty and ten villages enjoyed respectively a city, a village, five *kulas* of land and one *kula* of land, while the headman of the village received all that was daily payable by the villagers to the king in the shape of food, drink, fuel and other items. As we shall see later, some of these obligations of the tenants are mentioned in epigraphical records.

According to the *Kautilya Arthaśāstra*, the tax-paying tenants could sell or mortgage their fields to tax-payers, while *brahmadeya* land in the possession of Brāhmaṇas could be sold or mortgaged only to a person entitled to enjoy such land.<sup>2</sup> The violators of this rule were fined.

### 3. Sale of Land.

That the landlords and tenants were often entitled to sell their right to land is not only indicated by the *Viṅḍīya Sāhitya Pariṣad* plate of *Viṣṇurūpasena*, to which reference has been made above, but also by other records discovered in different parts of India. Thus a Nasik inscription says how *Ṛṣabhadatta*, governor of the Nasik-Poona region under the Śaka Satrap *Nahapāna* (119-24 A.D.) went to the holy *Puṣkara* near *Ajmer* in *Rajasthan* for a ceremonial bath and purchased there, at the price of 4000 *kārṣāpaṇas* (i.e. the silver coins issued by *Nahapāna*), through the Brāhmaṇa *Vārāhīputra Aśvibhūti*, an area of land belonging to *Aśvibhūti*'s father, for making a gift suitable for the occasion.<sup>3</sup> Considering the high price of the land

1. VII. 115-19. See below, p. 44, note 1.

2. See *Shamasastri's trans.*, pp. 194-95; cf. p. 217. It is stated that people enjoying rent-free land retained their title to it even when they lived abroad.

3. *Select Inscriptions*, 1942, p. 162.

in this case, it is possible to think that the area in question was quite big so as to form a considerable estate. Its Brāhmaṇa owner may therefore have been a privileged tenant or landlord.

The Madras Museum plates of the time of Narendradhavala, who ruled in the Ganjam region of Orissa in the tenth century A.D., offer some interesting information regarding a *kṛaya-śāsana* or document of purchase, which is really a deed of sale.<sup>1</sup> It is recorded in the inscription that a person named Seḍā, who was the son of a *Bhāṇḍagārika* (store-keeper) and the grandson of a *Kulaputraka* (nobleman), once purchased the village of Taḍeśvara, lying in Khinḍaraśṛṅga within the *maṇḍala* or district of Gomuṇḍa, from Śilābhāṇja who may have been a ruler. The said village was resold by Seḍā as a *kṛaya-śāsana* (land purchased by virtue of a *kṛaya-śāsana* or sale-deed) to three persons, viz., *Ṭhākura* Konvī, *Ṭhākura* Umbā and *Ḍombī* on receipt of a quantity of silver, specified as a little over 10 *palas*, with the consent of the following persons: (1) *Mahāsāmanta* Kareṭhī, (2) Sonapa, the son of *Mahāsāmanta* Aṭearā, (3) *Khāṭāvādāmaya*, (4) *Ṭhākura* Bahulā and (5) Kaḍukulliṅga. The names of a number of witnesses are also quoted in the record. In this case, the village was not a rent-free holding and its owner was a landlord. It is, however, difficult to say what privileges were enjoyed by these rent-paying landlords.

There are cases where the donees of the gift land were entitled to sell their rent-free estates. Thus the Semra plates of the Candella king Paramardin state as follows in an address to the king's tenants, etc.: "Be it known to you that the above-mentioned villages, with their water and land, with their movable and immovable belongings (*sthāvara-jaiṅama*), defined by their boundaries, with that which is below and above the ground, with all past, future and present imposts (*ādāya*), entrance into them being forbidden to the *Cāṭas* (*Barkandāzes*) and the rest.....have been given, for the sake of our own and our parents' merit and fame..... with the libation of water from our hand purified by the stems of *kuśa* grass, the wish for prosperity having been duly recited..... to the Brāhmaṇas.....the grant having been made in connection with the

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1. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXVIII, pp. 44 ff. A word comparable with *kṛaya-śāsana* is *kṛaya-śṛikā* used in the Mangraon inscription (*ibid.*, Vol. XXVI, p. 246).

intended ground which is to descend to the sons, grandsons and further descendants [of the donees] for a period equal to the duration of the moon and the sun. . . . Knowing this, you (the tenants) must bring to the donees the [royal] share [of the crops], the [periodical] offerings [payable to the king] and everything else. Therefore nobody should cause any hindrance to them (the donees) if they enjoy, cultivate, cause to be cultivated, give away, mortgage or sell these villages, together with their houses and walls, together with their gates of exit and entrance, together with all their plants, viz. *asana*, sugarcane, cotton, hemp, mangoes, mahuas and so forth, together with their forests, hollows and deposits (or accumulations on the soil), together with their mines of metal and so forth, together with their cow-houses, together with all other objects found within their boundaries, and together with the external and internal incomes.”<sup>1</sup>

As we shall see below, when such a rent-free holding was sold, the land was treated as rent-paying. The same must have also been the case when it was mortgaged.

Documents like the Maliya plates of the Maitraka king Dharasena II of Valabhī, dated 571 A.D., throw light on the problem of the ordinary tenants selling their landed property. The Maliya plates record the grant of the following plots of land in accordance with *bhūmicchidra-nyāya*, in favour of the Brāhmaṇa Rudrabhūti for enabling the donee to perform the five *mahāyajñas* (the daily duties of a Brāhmaṇa): (1) a plot measuring 100 *pādāvartas* (i.e.  $100 \times 100 = 10000$  square feet) at Śivapadraka within Antarātrā, which was the *pratyaya* of Vīrasena and Dantika; (2) 15 *pādāvartas* to the west of the above plot; (3) a plot measuring 120 *pādāvartas* on the western border of the first plot, which was the *pratyaya* of Skambhasena; (4) 90 *pādāvartas* being the *pratyaya* of a *vardhaki* (carpenter) in the eastern border of the village called Dombhigrāma; (5) 100 *pādāvartas* in the elevated area at the western border of Vajra-grāma; (6) a step-well with an area of 28 *pādāvartas* attached to it, being the *pratyaya* of Mahattara (member of the village council) Vikidīna; and (7) 100 *pādāvartas* and a step-well in the locality called Bhumbhusa-padraka, being the *pratyaya* of the agriculturist householder (*kuṭumbin*) named Boṭaka.<sup>2</sup> The word

1. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. IV, pp. 155-56; Sircar, *Indian Epigraphy*, pp. 395-96.

2. *Corp. Ins. Ind.*, Vol. III, pp. 164 ff.



*pratyaya* (also sometimes written as *pratyāya* or income)<sup>1</sup> means 'a subordinate', though the meaning in the present context is one's 'possession or property'. And there is little doubt that either the king purchased the plots of land from the persons in question for creating a free-holding in favour of the donees or he granted to the Brāhmaṇas only the revenue income of the various plots even though the real fact is not clearly stated in the inscription. Since the amount of taxes, etc., are not mentioned, the first alternative appears to be more likely. This is further supported by the fact that only one among the several persons in possession of the plots is described specifically as an agriculturist householder and that the others, especially the carpenter, were probably not husbandmen but individuals who got their fields tilled by others.

The donees receiving land from the kings as a free-holding were sometimes not entitled to sell the property to any other party. In some cases, we have a specific statement in the copper-plate charters to the effect that the grant was made in accordance with the custom relating to a permanent endowment (*akṣaya-nīvi-dharmaṇa*).<sup>2</sup> There is evidence to show that, when such an endowment was created by depositing some money in a mercantile corporation, the party, in whose favour it was created, could enjoy only the interest and had no right to withdraw the amount deposited.<sup>3</sup> The grant of land made according to the principle of a permanent endowment would therefore mean that its produce only could be enjoyed by the donee and his heirs, but that the land could not be alienated. With or without a reference to the custom regarding permanent endowments, some inscriptions of the Gupta age discovered in Bengal are known to use the word *apradā* in respect of the land and sometimes also a condition as 'in accordance with the custom relating to *apradā*' (*apradā-dharmaṇa*) with reference to the grant.<sup>4</sup> It seems that *aprada* (*kṣetra*) and *apradā* (*bhūmi*) are technical expressions signifying 'land to be enjoyed and not be alienated'. The charters of the Bhauma-Kara kings of Orissa probably indicate the same

1. *Corp. Ins. Ind.*, p. 170, note 5.

2. See, e.g., the Kanas plate of Lokavigraha (*Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXVIII, p. 331).

3. Cf. *Select Inscriptions*, p. 153 : *ete ca kāhṣapaṇā apradīdātavā vadhibhojā (ete ca kāṣṭhapaṇāḥ apradīdātavyāḥ vṛddhi-bhojyāḥ)*.

4. *Ibid.*, pp. 284, 286, 385, 329, 330, 338, 339.

conception in the passage *a-lokhanī-praveśatayā* (literally, 'with the condition of no employment of the pen') which seems to refer to the stipulation that the land in question could not be made by the donee the subject of any other document.<sup>1</sup>

It seems that even when the holder of a revenue-free estate was allowed to sell his property, usually, it no longer remained rent-free, so that the purchaser would become a rent-paying subject to the king. A section of the Vaṅgīya Sāhitya Pariṣad plate refers to a plot of land situated in the locality called Ghāgharākāṭṭi-pāṣaka lying to the east of Jayajāhaḍā in the *caturaka* of Urā in Phandradvīpa. This land measuring 12½ *udānas* and yielding 50 *purāṇas* per annum was attached to the *śāsana* (i.e. land granted rent-free by means of a charter) in the possession of *Rājapaṇḍita* Maheśvara who sold it to *Paṇḍita* Halāyudha. But the king had to grant the land afresh to the purchaser. Thus he allowed Halāyudha the rent-free enjoyment of the land by recognising its alienation by Maheśvara to whom the free-holding originally belonged.<sup>2</sup> It is of course unknown whether Halāyudha paid any amount of money to the State for the purpose. But it is quite probable. As we shall see below, even *tejahsvāmya* (i.e. complete control) over landed property could be secured from the State by virtue of purchase.

There are cases of the donee of a rent-free holding donating a portion of the gift land in favour of a third party with the king's consent. Thus the Daulatpura plate<sup>3</sup> shows how Bhaṭṭa Vāsudeva received an *agrahāra* from the Pratihāra king Vatsarāja by means of a charter and donated its sixth part to Bhaṭṭa Viṣṇu with the consent of king Nāgabhaṭa II. The said charter and consent having fallen into abeyance, during the reign of king Bhoja, that monarch re-granted proportional shares of the *agrahāra* to the descendants of Vāsudeva and Viṣṇu.

#### 4. Landlords and their Privileges.

That the rights of the landlords were not the same is indicated by the fact that all their privileges are not found in all the records. There were probably also regional variations in the condition of landlordship in differ-

1. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXVIII, pp. 216; Vol. XXIX, p. 89.

2. See *Journ. As. Soc.*, Letters, Vol. XX, pp. 206-07.

3. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. V, pp. 212-13.

ent parts of the country, particular privileges being peculiar to an area. It must, however, be pointed out that, in many charters, the privileges attached to the grants of land made in favour of the gods and Brāhmaṇas are vaguely indicated as 'all such exemptions or customary privileges' and that this would indicate a general agreement on the nature of the privileges at least in an area or a kingdom.

In the inscriptions of the Kannaḍa-speaking area, sometimes we have reference to a fief-holder enjoying only a portion of the revenue income of an estate. Thus the fief-holder is represented as governing or managing an *agrahāra* or village according to *tribhag-ābhyaṅtara-siddhi*.<sup>1</sup> This has been understood to mean that the person was enjoying only one-third of the income of the estate, the other two-thirds going in equal shares to gods and Brāhmaṇas.

Another interesting tenure is also noticed in the records of the said region. It is called *pannasa* or *panṇāśa* in Kannaḍa and seems to stand for Sanskrit *pañcāśat* probably meaning 'fifty per cent'. During the reign of the Early Cālukya king Vijayāditya (696-733 A.D.), an area of 80 measures of cultivable land is stated to have been granted as *pannasa* to a Brāhmaṇa by one who was probably a fief-holder in the district of Vaṅganūr then under the rule of the Vāṇa (Bāṇa) king. The grant was 'made with due ceremony after the announcement of the royal order to the effect in the presence of Cappilīrāja and the residents of the two villages'.<sup>2</sup> It appears that the donee was allowed to enjoy fifty per cent (i.e. half) of the produce or income of the gift land, and this creation of a partially rent-free holding in favour of the Brāhmaṇa by the fief-holder had to be ratified by the king. There is little doubt that the fief-holder paid an adequate sum to the State for obtaining the favour. Another record of the time of Cālukya Vikramāditya II (733-45 A.D.) registers the grant of a *pannasa* at a village in the district ruled by Pormukharāma on behalf of the Bāṇa (Vāṇa) king.<sup>3</sup> In this case also, the person who made the grant seems to have been a fief-holder who purchased the right to create the partially rent-free holding from the State. In some cases, the donee is stated to have enjoyed only half of the *bhaga* and *bhāga*, and this refers to the same tenure as the

1. *Bomb. Gaz.*, Vol. I, part ii, pp. 440, 448.

2. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXX, p. 70.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 14.

*pannasa*.<sup>1</sup> The Anasū plates of Śīlāditya III refer to the *brāhmaṇavinīṣati* along with rent-free holdings owned by temples and Brāhmaṇas.<sup>2</sup> It seems to mean a property, twenty per cent of the revenue of which was enjoyed by a Brāhmaṇa donee.

There are cases in which the grant of a village is made with the specification of only those rights of the king which were not transferred to the donee. Thus a charter of the Lāṭa chief Trilocanapāla records the gift of an estate, apparently as a rent-free holding, but without any right over the following: (1) *nidhāna* (deposits or accumulations on the soil), (2) *ālīpaka* (income from bees such as wax and honey), (3) *kumārīsāhasa* (fines for abducting an unmarried girl), (4) *pañca-mahādōṣa* (fines for the five great sins) and (5) *deva-dviḥa-datti* (rent-free holdings in the possession of gods and Brāhmaṇas).<sup>3</sup> This means that the donee was entitled to enjoy the other privileges usually going with rent-free holdings.

The word *śāsana* means a *rāja-śāsana* or royal charter and *tāmra-śāsana* 'a royal charter engraved on a plate or plates of copper'. Revenue-free lands granted by ancient Indian rulers in favour of persons, deities or religious establishments were usually endowed with deeds engraved on durable *tāmra-paṭṭa* meaning a plate or plates of copper, although we also know that such documents were also written on other materials. A *tāmra-śāsana* was sometimes called a *tāmra-paṭṭa*, and both the words were often used to indicate the land granted by means of a royal charter. In some cases, the document and the land granted by it were both called either *tāmra* or *śāsana* as already indicated above. Rent-free holdings in the possession of temples and Brāhmaṇas were often called respectively *devadāya* or *devadāya* and *brahmadāya* or *brahmadāya*. In South India, the word *agrahāra* was popular in the sense of a rent-free holding in the possession of Brāhmaṇas.<sup>4</sup>

But privileges in respect of the enjoyment of land were sometimes secured from the State by various other types of people, notable among them being members of the mercantile community as we shall see below.

Thus the donees of royal charters, who became landlords of the estates granted to them, were not always Brāhmaṇas and temple authorities, and

1. Gadre, *Important Inscriptions from the Baroda State*, Vol. I, p. 52.

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 23-24.

3. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXXVI, pp. 14, 18.

4. See Sircar, *Indian Epigraphy*, pp. 103-04.

other persons, who sometimes succeeded in getting such estates created for them by making suitable payments of money to the king or as a result of services rendered to the State, belonged to different communities. An inscription of the Gaṅga king Madhukāmaṇava contains a passage stating how a *Vaiśya-āgrahāra* (a rent-free estate possessed by a member of the mercantile community) was created by the donor on receipt of 150 *rūpyas* (silver coins) from the party.<sup>1</sup>

The nature of a *Vaiśya-āgrahāra* or rent-free holding in the possession of members of the mercantile community, sometimes created by the king on receipt of suitable sums from a merchant or a group of them, seems to be illustrated by an inscription of the Śaundraya ruler Bhogaśakti who is stated to have recolonised the township of Samagiri along with four other localities and given it to the *nagara* (mercantile guild of the town) headed by two *Śreṣṭhins* or bankers.<sup>2</sup> The merchants of Samagiri were exempted from the payment of customs duties permanently throughout the kingdom. Their property would not escheat to the State in the absence of male heir, nor should they suffer from *umbara-bheda* (breaking of the door, i.e. collection of taxes during their absence on business trips abroad) and the obligation of providing accommodation (*āvāsaka*) and food (*jemaka*) to the State officials. Besides the above, the merchants were entitled to pay fines for certain offences at the following rates—(1) 108 *rūpakas* (silver coins of 20 *ratīs*) for abduction of an unmarried girl, (2) 32 *rūpakas* for adultery, (3) 16 *rūpakas* for the mutilation of cars (*kaṇṇa-troḍanikā*), (4) 4 *rūpakas* for striking on the head (*śira-sphoṭana*), (5) 108 *rūpakas* from a merchant's son guilty of adultery with a *bhārikā* (female porter ?) and (6) 8 or 16 *rūpakas* (as determined by the *nagara-mahallakas* or members of the town-council) from one caught in *naiga* (in the course of committing adultery?).<sup>3</sup> There can be little doubt that the merchants of Samagiri obtained the above privileges from the State against payment of a suitable sum of money. The fixation of the amount of fines probably suggests that often

1. Sircar, *Indian Epigraphy*, p. 111.

2. In South Indian inscriptions, the word *nagara* often means 'a guild of merchants or a mercantile town'. See T. N. Subramanian, *South Indian Temple Inscriptions*, Vol. III, Glossary, p. xli, s. v.

3. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXV, p. 237. For similar privileges obtained by merchants, see also Viṣṇuśeṇa's charter (*ibid.*, Vol. XXX, pp. 163 ff.).

much heavier fines were exacted from the merchants on the plea that the small fines prescribed in the law-books for particular offences were not sufficient punishment for wealthy merchants. Otherwise, the concession would mean that the merchants were allowed to pay fines in lieu of physical punishments.

The Garra plates (1205 A.D.) of the Candella king Tralokyavarman refer to a rent-free estate granted to the son of one who had lost his life while fighting the Turuṣkas or Muhammadans on the king's side as a *mṛtyuka-ṣṭī* (literally, 'death-grant').<sup>1</sup> There are Tamil inscriptions recording the creation of *iratta-mānya* (*rakta-mānya*) or *iratta-kkanikkai* (literally, 'blood present') or *ndirapaṭṭi* (*rudhira*<sup>o</sup>) meaning an endowment of rent-free land for the maintenance of the family of warriors killed in battle,<sup>2</sup> and the holders of such estates belonged to different communities.

When a large area was purchased by an officer or subordinate for the creation of a free-holding in favour of a temple or a Brāhmana, the king often allowed him to retain a portion of the land. Thus, out of the 25 *pāṭakas* secured by an officer from king Śrīdhāraṇarāta of Samataṭa, 13 *pāṭakas* were granted to a number of Brāhmanas, 4½ *pāṭakas* to *Bhagavat Tathāgata-ratna* (Buddha) or the Ratna-traya (Buddhist trinity symbolised in a religious establishment) and ½ *pāṭaka* to the officer in question.<sup>3</sup> This officer of the Samataṭa king, having regards for both the Brahmanical and Buddhist faiths, who now obtained a rent-free holding, may have belonged to any community. There are many other cases of this type, which make it clear that free-holdings were not confined to the temples and Brāhmanas.

The vassal chiefs ruled their principalities more or less independently, but had to help their overlord when the latter became engaged in wars. In the Vijayanagara empire, a number of landlords were created for the special purpose of getting military assistance whenever required.<sup>4</sup> Whether

1. Sircar, *Ind. Ep.*, p. 118.

2. Subramanian, *South Indian Temple Inscriptions*, Vol. III, Glossary, pp. xix, lxxxii. This practice shows that the warriors were not bound to fight for the king under an obligation.

3. *Ind. Hist. Quart.*, Vol. XXIII, pp. 234-36.

4. See T. V. Mahalingam, *Administration and Social Life under Vijayanagar*, pp. 140, 184.

such an institution existed in the earlier periods cannot be determined in the present state of our knowledge.

The landlords, bound to the Vijayanagara kings by the ties of military service, held State land on a tenure known as *amara*, so that they were themselves styled *Amara-nāyakas*. They were probably responsible for the supply of foot-soldiers, horses and elephants. Estates held under the *amara* tenure could be resumed by the king if the stipulated service was not rendered. In this respect the *amara* tenure was similar to the allotment of plots of land to the priest, barber, washerman, carpenter and others for the services to be received from them regularly.

The responsibility of all *Amara-nāyakas* was apparently not the same. Probably their military assistance to the king was commensurate with the size and income of their estates. In Wilson's *Glossary*, it has been suggested that each *Amara-nāyaka* was the commander of one thousand foot-soldiers.

The *Amara-nāyakas* gave their lands to minor landlords on similar terms of military service just as the subordinate rulers had various grades of vassal chiefs under them.

### 5. Landlordism and Feudalism

The *amara* tenure reminds us of the social and economic system called feudalism that was prevalent in much of Western Europe in the Middle Ages, though the *Amara-nāyaka* and his subordinates appear to have been free from the obligation whenever they relinquished the property held by them and were by no means tied to the soil.<sup>1</sup>

The central principle of feudalism was the holding of land in return for services. The king was regarded as the holder of all land, much of which he let out to his barons or tenants-in-chief who, in return for the property, agreed to perform certain services and to make some payments and supplies. This was usually to provide the king with a specified number of soldiers in times of war. The barons, in their turn, let out land to

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1. The persons engaged in civil and military services under an Indian king were sometimes divided into *Maula* (hereditary servants enjoying land in lieu of salary) and *Bhṛtaka* (servants receiving pay in cash or grains, etc.); but there was no provision to compel the former to stick to the soil.

others on similar conditions, and the same process was continued down the scale. When a tenant died, it was usual for his successor to pay a fine to his overlord before he could succeed to his estate. Fines were also paid when the tenant sold or gave any part of his land to a stranger. Payments had again to be made to the master on other recognized occasions such as the knighting of the latter's eldest son and the marriage of his eldest daughter and when he himself had to pay ransom.

But the landlordism of ancient and medieval India, which we have discussed above, should not be confused with feudalism. In India, the king was never the actual owner of the land under permanent tenants. The majority of the numerous charters, discovered all over India, as will be seen from our discussions, record grants of land without stipulating any obligation of the Brāhmanas and temple authorities to the donors. Obviously, the priestly class was the most unsuitable for rendering services of the feudal type. On the other hand, it is generally stated in clear terms in the grants that the donees were exempted from all kinds of obligations including the supply of unpaid labour and sometimes also that they were entitled to sell or mortgage the donated property. The object of the grants is generally stated to have been the religious merit and fame of the donors and their parents. There are only a few charters recording grant of land to people of the warrior and other classes, sometimes for services rendered to the king. But, excluding the *amara* tenure of late medieval South India, there is absolutely no mention of obligations having resemblance with those of the feudal type even in such records. The successor of a donee was not required to pay any money or presents to the king and to obtain a renewal of the grant and it is usually stated in the records that the rent-free estate would pass automatically to the donee's heirs. In the feudal system, the man who held land from another was considered to be the dependant and subordinate of the latter. But, in India, the social position of the Brāhmaṇa donee was exceptionally high, and he was not looked upon as the king's vassal.

It is supposed that feudalism involving payment for services in land instead of coins developed in an economy which was characterised by dearth of coins and absence of trade and commerce and that India also exhibited the same characteristics after the fall of the Guptas in the sixth century A. D. Nothing can be more erroneous. Of course early Indian



rulers sometimes granted *jāgīrs* for the maintenance of their officers and dependants. But the latter were not under the feudal type of obligations, and there was never any real dearth of coins in the market. A large number of kings and other agencies of the post-Gupta period issued coins which have been discovered in all parts of the country. Moreover, numerous records, both literary and epigraphical, mention various coins of gold, silver and copper prevalent in those days, e. g., *purāṇa* (also called *kārjūpapa*, *dhāraṇa*, *dramma*, *rūpaka* and *chūrṇi*), *gadgāra*, *māda*, *dīnāra*, *niṣka* or *suvarṇa*, *viṃśopaka* or *viśa*, *kaṭāñju*, *aceu*, *pana*, *varāha*, etc. Over and above these, there were always plenty of cowrie-shells which were extensively used as coined money in the period in question. The *Rājatarāṅgiṇī* often speaks of payment of salary in cowrie-shells called *dinnāra* in ancient Kashmir (e.g. Udbhaṭa getting one lakh *dinnāras* per day from Jayāpīḍa, 8th century, and Rudrapāla 1½ lakhs and Diddāpala 80,000 daily from Ananta, 1028-63 A. D.).<sup>1</sup> According to the Arab writers, the Rāṣṭrakūṭa king of Mānyakheṭa 'gives regular pay to his troops.'<sup>2</sup> Altekar draws our attention to Kāmandaka's statement that a force that gets its wages regularly and promptly would fight with greater enthusiasm than one that is not promptly paid. He also refers to the *Rājatarāṅgiṇī* according to which soldiers in medieval Kashmir were paid an additional allowance when they were out on duty (*pravāsa-dhana*). It has of course to be admitted that many of the ruling families flourishing in the early and medieval ages do not appear to have issued coins. But the reason apparently is that the traders did not feel the necessity for fresh coins owing to the plenty of older issues and cowrie-shells in the market. There is enough evidence to show that coins of any country, once circulated in the Indian market, never went out of use and that cowries were there to make up the scarcity even if coins were not occasionally available in particular areas for some

1. See *Rājatarāṅgiṇī*, IV. 495; VII. 145-46. Cf. also *dinnāra-khārī* or money in terms of crops in Stein, *Kaṭhāṇa's Rājatarāṅgiṇī*, Vol. II, pp. 313, 325, and *kapardaka-purāṇa* (silver coin counted in cowrie-shells) in the official records of the Senas of Eastern India (Majumdar, *Ins. Beng.*, Vol. III, p. 58, 66, etc.).

2. *The Age of Imperial Kanauj*, ed. Majumdar, p. 17. They had also *Maula* soldiers who enjoyed land in lieu of pay. Cf. Altekar, *The Rāṣṭrakūṭas and their Times*, pp. 250 ff.

reason or other.<sup>1</sup> There is again some reason to believe that, during the period in question, the right to mint money was leased to goldsmiths who made coins according to the demand of the traders and bankers, and it was these latter who determined whether fresh coins were necessary at any particular time. They paid a commission for getting their bullion minted into coins.<sup>2</sup>

The wealth exacted by the early Muslim invaders from the defeated Indian kings and the plundered temples as well as the high salaries in cash paid by the Kashmir kings to their officers undoubtedly point to the great prosperity of the country, which must have been due at least partially to flourishing internal and external trade. As regards internal trade, we may refer to the *Rājatarāṅgiṇī* indicating Kashmir's commercial relations with Malwa and the Deccan in the 11th century, while India's trade with the Arab world and with China (both by sea and by land) and the countries beyond the Bay of Bengal can be easily proved. In connection with internal trade, prominent mention must be made of the mercantile and occupational guilds, especially the powerful organisations known from South Indian records as *Spadeśī*, *Paradeśī* and *Nānādeśī*. The prevalence of communal guilds all over the country to look after the members of a community is also quite incompatible with the existence of feudalism.

It is sometimes supposed that the king or landlord had often right over the person of the tenants who were tied to the land in more or less the feudal sense.<sup>3</sup> This view appears to be wrong. 'To give a village' is really the same as 'to give a village together with the villagers' which means that the king's rent-paying subjects in the village should henceforth pay taxes to the donee. Indeed the grant of a village without giving the donee the power of tax-collection from the villagers was never meant by any Indian document, though records of the grants of different dynasties were worded in different styles. As regards the occasional mention of the gift of a village together with this or that person or class of people, such as the reference to vintners, etc., being attached to a gift-village, no doubt means

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1. Cf. *JNSI*, Vol. VIII, pp. 82 ff.; Vol. XXIII, pp. 297 ff.

2. Cf. *ibid.*, Vol. XV, p. 189; see Vol. VII, pp. 87 ff.; Vol. XXXIV, pp. 1 ff.

3. Cf. *Journal of Economic and Social History of the Orient*, Vol. VI, Part III, 1963, pp. 296 ff.; *JIH*, Vol. XXX, p. 310.

that the revenue income from particular classes was state monopoly in some areas exactly as the income from mango and some other trees. Professionals like the priests, barbers, carpenters, washermen, etc., often enjoyed State land or common village land on the condition of offering their services regularly to the villagers,<sup>1</sup> and such people could be attached to a grant without the state having any right over their person. Some of the attached persons were no doubt slaves. But agriculturist householders allotted to a grant must have been enjoying State land or favours for working in the State farms or for ploughing State land on the condition of receiving a share of the crops. Particular merchants of markets in different villages were often attached to a particular gift village by the Eastern Ganga kings apparently because the king was willing to augment the donee's income by transferring his revenue income from them in favour of the donee. It is impossible to believe that the king could have any right over the person of the *Śreṣṭhins* often mentioned in this connection. (Sometimes people of one state migrated to and settled in another, so that tenants were never tied to the soil in India as in the European feudal system.)

As Hallam long ago pointed out, "It is easy to find partial resemblance to the feudal system. The relation of patron and client in the republic of Rome has been deemed to resemble it, as well as the barbarians and veterans who held frontier lands on the tenure of defending them and the frontier; but they were bound not to an individual, but to the State. Such a resemblance of fiefs may be found in the Zamindars of Hindustan and the Timariots of Turkey. The clans of the Highlanders and Irish followed their chieftain into the field; but their tie was that of imagined kindred and birth, not the spontaneous compact of vassalage."<sup>2</sup>

In spite of Hallam's warning, Tod, in the first half of the last century, was tempted to believe in the existence of most of the peculiar characteristics of feudalism in late medieval Rajasthan.<sup>3</sup> Fortunately, however, later

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1. Services could be paid by allotment of land by all people enjoying landed property, such as kings, landlords, traders, cultivators, etc.; but those who enjoyed the allotted land for their services were in a position to give up the land and stop rendering service and to settle in a different district or state. This is quite different from feudal bonds.

2. *Middle Ages*, Vol. I, p. 200.

3. *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*, ed. Crooke, Vol. I, pp. 153 ff.

writers on the subject have exposed Tod's "obvious anxiety to discover elements of European Feudalism in the Rajput States."<sup>1</sup> Sometimes even more careful writers also made similar mistakes. Thus Stein, in the latter half of the last century, explains the word *ḍāmara*, as found in Kalhaṇa's *Rājatarāṅgiṇī*, as 'a feudal baron.'<sup>2</sup> But the *ḍāmaras* of Kashmir were rural landholders and not feudal barons in the European sense. This is quite clear from several references in the *Rājatarāṅgiṇī*. It is said that king Lalitāditya (8th century A. D.) warned his successors not to leave with the cultivators of the land more than what was necessary for their bare sustenance and the cultivation of their fields, because, if they were allowed to accumulate wealth, they would, in a single year, become formidable *ḍāmaras* strong enough to defy the king's command (IV. 347-48). In the 11th century A. D., Jayyaka, the clever son of a householder of Selyapura, is stated to have succeeded in becoming a *ḍāmara* by means of accumulating the income derived from his lands and trading with foreign countries in foodgrains (VII. 499 ff.). One could therefore become a *ḍāmara* without any contact or contract with the king. On the execution of Lakkana-candra, a *ḍāmara* in possession of the fort of Dudhaghāta and the surrounding lands, by order of king Kalāśa, the *ḍāmara's* widow offered the fort to the king apparently for protection from the inroads of the Daradas, though the king refused the offer, so that the Dugdhaghāta region, which looks like the hereditary property of the *ḍāmara*, fell into the hands of the Darada ruler (VII. 1171 ff.). Considering the above cases, it is impossible to agree with Stein's hesitant conjecture that "a kind of service tenure, the grant of land in return for military or other services, may have been the original foundation of the system."<sup>3</sup> It is interesting to note that, in the 16th century, the designation *ḍāmara* was applied to local grandees both Hindu and Muhammadan,<sup>4</sup> and the same seems to have been the position in early times.

With the growth of communism, a new conception of history developed, and a socio-economic approach to historiography became popular

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1. Cf. A. C. Banerjee, *The Rajput States and the East India Company*, pp. 239 ff.

2. *Kalhaṇa's Rājatarāṅgiṇī*, Vol. II, pp. 304 ff.

3. *Op. cit.*, p. 307.

4. *Loc. cit.*

with a section of Western historians who conceive of the existence of four successive stages through which the history of a country has to pass. These are : (1) the primitive community and the system of slavery, (2) the feudal period, (3) the capitalist period, and (4) the epoch of socialism.<sup>1</sup> This uncritical and dogmatic approach exercised considerable influence on some Indian historians about the middle of the present century, and we have seen attempts to prove the existence of a feudal period in early Indian history. It is not that different writers of this category interpret the data in the same way. Often they differ widely in this respect, one finding traces of the system only in one period and another in a second. Really, however, the views of all these writers appear to us to be based on misunderstanding and wrong interpretation of the evidence at our disposal as well as on the study only of a part of it. Like the Zamindari system of late medieval Hindustan, the early Indian land system may exhibit some superficial resemblance with European feudalism; but none of the essential characteristics of the feudal system has been traced in India.

#### 6. *More Comments on Recent Views on 'Indian' Feudalism.*

Our attention has been drawn to a Chinese account<sup>2</sup> of India, which belongs to 732 A.D. and runs as follows:

“(I) According to the law of the Five Indies, from the king, the royal consort and the princes down to the chiefs and their wives, all build monasteries separately in accordance with their respective capacities and abilities.

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1. Cf. *Outline History of the U. S. S. R.*, Moscow, 1960.

2. See Jan Yun-Hua, 'Hui Chao's Record on Kashmir' in *Kashmir Research Biannual*, No. 2 (1962), pp. 119-20; R.S. Sharma, *Indian Feudalism: C. 300-1200*, pp. 58-59. Workers in the field of Indian historical research generally attach considerable importance to the early accounts of foreign writers, even though they are often found to be demonstrably defective. It is well known as to how the statement of Megasthenes regarding the absence of slavery in ancient India and the freedom of the country from famines influenced some students of Indian history and how they are now usually believed to be due to insufficient study or misunderstanding of the socio-economic life of ancient India. Cf. R.C. Majumdar, *The Classical Accounts of India*, pp. 224, 233; see also *Camb. Hist. Ind.*, Vol. I, pp. 203, 416; A.N. Bose, *Social and Rural Economy of Northern India, 600 B.C.-200 A.D.*, Vol. I, 1942, pp. 129 ff.

Each of them builds his own temple, but does not construct it jointly. They say, 'When each person has one's own meritorious virtues, what is the necessity of joint effort?'

"(II) Whenever a monastery is built, a village and its folk are immediately offered to support the Three Precious Ones. Merely building a monastery without making any donation of a village and its folk is not done.

"(III) This is followed as an example by foreign countries.

"(IV) The king, the queen and the royal consorts have their respective villages and their folk.

"(V) Donation is free and the king is not asked for that. This also applies in the case of building a temple. When it is necessary to build a temple, they build it and the king is not asked. The king dare not obstruct. He is afraid lest it should infect him with sins.

"(VI) As to rich commoners, though they have no village to donate, they try their best to build temples and manage these by themselves. Whenever they obtain things, they offer them to the Three Precious Ones.

"(VII) As in the Five Indies no human being is sold, so there are no female slaves.

"(VIII) Villages and their inhabitants could be donated if wanted and necessary."

This account contains statements characterised by misunderstanding and half-truths as will be clear from the following analysis:

I. Of course the Indians were never miserly as regards expenditure for the purpose of securing religious merit and often built temples, monasteries, etc., individually when they could afford it. But the impression created is that the Indians always built religious establishments individually and were never inclined to share the merit accruing to a pious deed with anybody else. This is certainly wrong since collective performance of deeds for the sake of religious merit has been an important feature of Indian religious life throughout the ages. We have many instances of *cāityas* and cave-dwellings for monks made by the inhabitants of an entire village, or all the members of a family, or a guild or a group of people.<sup>1</sup> There are innumerable similar other cases of meritorious deeds jointly performed

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1. Cf. e.g., Lüders' List of Inscriptions, Nos. 1037, 1045, 1048, 1107, 1121, 1127, 1140, 1153, 1169, 1180, 1183.

by a group of persons.<sup>1</sup> It is well known that grants of land were made by early Indian kings often for the religious merit of their own as well as their parents or families,<sup>2</sup> while Buddhist images were dedicated to temples for the merit of the donors and their parents, teachers, etc., as well as for the benefit of the whole world.<sup>3</sup> A Nagarjunikonda inscription says how queen Rudradhara-bhaṭṭārikā, besides donating a pillar, contributed a sum of 170 *dināri-māṣakas* towards the expenses incurred for building a Stūpa by her husband's paternal aunt.<sup>4</sup>

II. That a village and its folk were granted in favour of a monastery as soon as it was founded by the kings, etc., is a half-truth since often rent-free plots of land were granted for the maintenance of religious establishments instead of rent-free villages<sup>5</sup> and often permanent endowments (*akṣaya-nīvi*) were created for their maintenance by depositing a sum of money in a guild.<sup>6</sup>

III. That the custom of granting land for the maintenance of religious establishments was emulated by some foreign rulers is corroborated by the Nalanda plate of Devapāla recording the grant of five villages of the Patna-Gaya region for the maintenance of the monastery built at Nalanda by the Śailendra king Bālaputradeva of Indonesia and Malayasia and that of one village by the Cola king Rājārāja I in favour of another monastery built at Nāgapattanam by another Śailendra king named Māraviṣayottuṅ-gavarman.<sup>7</sup> The gift villages in question were apparently purchased, at least theoretically, by the builders of the monasteries from the Pāla and Cola kings respectively.<sup>8</sup> It seems however that such establishments found-

1. See *ibid.*, Nos. 925-26, 931, 1006, 1020, 1024, 1041, 1121, 1127, 1181, 1210, 1239, 1248, 1250-52, 1254-55, 1262, 1271-72, 1280-81, 1284, 1287, 1291-92, 1294, 1303, 1329-30.

2. See, e.g., *Select Inscriptions*, 1965, pp. 395, 467, 487, 491, etc.

3. See, e.g., *JBRs*, Vol. XXXVII, Parts 3-4, 1951 (Some Inscriptions from Bihar, p. 10); Vol. XLI, Part 2, 1955 (Jaynagar Image Inscription of Year 35, p. 9), etc.

4. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XX, p. 19 and note.

5. Cf. *Select Inscriptions*, 1965, pp. 197 ff., 200-01.

6. Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 164 ff.

7. See *The History and Culture of the Indian People*, Vol. IV. p. 52; Vol. V, p. 236 (cf. p. 239).

8. Cf. Sircar, *Indian Epigraphy*, pp. 114 ff.; *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXXIII, pp. 50 ff.

ed by rich foreigners were often maintained by grants of money and rent-paying landed property purchased by them for the purpose.

IV. This refers to the king's *Khās Mahāl* and the *jāgīrs* or rent-free holdings in the possession of his dependants, officers and favourites. Creation of such holdings in favour of temples, monks, learned Brāhmaṇas, etc., are well known from the Śaka-Śātavāhana age down to recent times. There is evidence to show that the early Indian kings paid for the services of their officers and servants in several ways. The *Kauṭīliya Arthaśāstra*<sup>1</sup> speaks of payment of *vetana* in cash and *bhakta* in foodgrains to the various grades of officers, while the *Manusmṛiti*<sup>2</sup> prescribes payment of wages in foodgrains, cash and clothing in the case of menial workers and by *jāgīr* in the case of high officers. Hiuen-tsang's *Si-yu-ki*<sup>3</sup> also refers to payment by means of *jāgīrs* in the case of high officers and the *Rājatarāṅgī*<sup>4</sup> speaks of payment of wages by money or *khārīs* of crops, although Stein believes that the Kashmirian officers, etc., were usually paid in crops. There is likewise reference in the epigraphic records to the king's *Khās Mahāl*<sup>5</sup> and the *jāgīrs* in the possession of the king's officers and the members of the royal family.<sup>6</sup>

It has to be noticed that, in the rent-free holdings and *jāgīrs*, the obligations of the inhabitants towards the king were transferred to the landlord. The lower class of tenants (such as temporary tenants) in such holdings had to offer *viṣṭi* or unpaid labour to the master. This has been somewhat misunderstood in the Chinese account as the grant of villages together with their folk.

V. The impression created by the statement that all kinds of donations and the building of temples, etc., could be undertaken by anybody without the sanction of the government is no doubt wrong. Donation of money from one's own pocket and of rent-paying land out of one's landed property

1. Cf. Shamasastri's trans., pp. 276 ff.

2. See VII. 118-119, 126.

3. Watters, *On Yuan Chwang's Travels in India*, Vol. I, p. 177.

4. Cf. Stein, *Kalhaṇa's Rājatarāṅgī*, Vol. II, pp. 327-28.

5. See *Select Inscriptions*, 1965, p. 200, text line 4: *rājakaṁ kṣetram-asmat-svatvaṁ*.

6. See *JAS*, Letters, Vol. XX, p. 206, for the grant of land out of their respective *jāgīrs* by the king's mother, by his two sons and by one of his ministers.



apparently did not require the king's special consent, although the transfer of the ownership of landed property must have required the recognition of the State. But the creation of a rent-free holding out of one's *jāgīr* was not possible without the State's permission and that is why the Vaṅgīya Sāhitya Pariṣad plate of Viśvarūpasena ratifies the grants made out of the *jāgīrs* of the king's mother, of his two sons and of one of his ministers.<sup>1</sup>

The specific mention of temple-building in the passage *devakula-puṣkarīṇy-ādikaṁ kārayitvā* in the above-mentioned Vaṅgīya Sāhitya Pariṣad plate of Viśvarūpasena makes it clear that temples could be built by the privileged tenants without government sanction, but that the ordinary tenants were not entitled to do so.<sup>2</sup>

VI. There is evidence to show that a rich commoner paid some money to the State for creating a rent-free holding in favour of a temple and the Government approved of his proposal.<sup>3</sup>

VII. This of course reminds us of similar wrong statements of Megasthenes, to which reference has been made above.

VIII. That rent-paying villages could be granted without the king's special permission (probably on payment of fees required for the transfer of landlordship) and that rent-free holdings could be created by payments made to the government is to be admitted. But the implication that the inhabitants of the gift village served as serfs to the donees is certainly wrong. A village was normally inhabited by people of different communities including Brāhmaṇas, Mahattaras, Kārakas, merchants, artisans, etc., and its permanent tenants enjoyed privileges of various grades and it is only the obligations of the villagers to the king that could be transferred to the donees of the royal grants. Priests, carpenters, barbers, fishermen and others who enjoyed village-land in lieu of service had to offer their service to the new landlord while temporary tenants had to offer their *ṛiṣṭi* or unpaid labour according to rules. It is however absurd to think that high class people including Brāhmaṇas, village-elders and big merchants served as serfs.

Let us take up a specific case. The Khoh copper plate grant of *Mahārāja Śarvanātha*, dated in the Gupta year 193 (512 A.D.) records a grant as

1. *Loc. cit.*

2. *Ibid.*, p. 207.

3. See *Select Inscriptions*, pp. 333, 348-49, 357-58, 360-61.

follows : 'Mahārāja Śarvanātha informs the cultivators including the Brāhmaṇas as well as the artisans at the village of Āśramaka on the northern banks of the Tamasā : 'Be it known to you that this village is allotted by me, in four shares, permanently, together with the taxes on permanent and temporary tenants and freedom from the entry of royal agents and policemen. Two of the four shares belong to Viṣṇunandin, and the third and fourth respectively to Skandanāga's son Śaktināga and to Kumārnanāga and Skandanāga. The gift village is to be enjoyed by themselves and their descendants. It is moreover agreed by them and by myself that the village is given for the repairs, by the donees and their descendants for the increase of their religious merit, of whatever may be broken or torn in the shrine of the Bhagavat (Viṣṇu) established by them and in that of Āditya-bhaṭṭāraka as well as for the maintenance of *bali*, *caru*, *saltra*, perfumes, incense, gorlauds and lamps. You yourselves should render to the donees the offering of the customary dues including taxes in the shape of the grain-share and periodical offerings and tax payable in cash and shall be obedient to their commands.'

It is quite clear from the language of the record, which is not dissimilar to that of numerous other similar documents, that the king relegated to the donee landlords what he himself expected and realised from the villagers. It is indeed impossible to think that the tenants including the Brāhmaṇas, artisans and other inhabitants, who are clearly stated to have paid taxes in kind and cash, were mere serfs.

We therefore find it difficult to agree with the view that the said Chinese account of 732 A.D. "establishes a significant link between the breakdown of slavery and emergence of serfdom" and that "obviously the inhabitants were bound to serve the donors as long as they lived under them and to serve the beneficiaries when they were transferred to the latter."<sup>2</sup> Since the pattern of the donation of villages in favour of temples does not exhibit any change in the Indian royal documents from the Śaka-Śātavāhana age to recent times, there is no justification for postulating the breakdown of slavery and emergence of serfdom on the basis of the Chinese account of 732 A.D. specially because rent-free land and villages were granted by Indian rulers in favour of Buddhist monks dwelling in the

1. Cf. *Corp. Ins. Ind.*, Vol. III, pp.128-29; *Select Inscriptions*, pp.391-92.

2. R.S. Sharma, *Indian Feudalism: C. 300-1200*, p. 59.

excavated caves of Western India as early as the 2nd century A.D., and when even the pre-Gupta work called *Manusmṛiti* speaks of the *jāgīrs* enjoyed by the different grades of the king's governors,<sup>1</sup> it is indeed absurd to speak of the emergence of serfdom about 732 A.D., on the basis of the Chinese account of the said date.

In an interesting paper on 'Quasi-manorial Rights in Ancient India', published in the *Journal of Economic and Social History of the Orient*, Vol. VI, Part iii, 1963, pp. 295-309, it has been first pointed out that the ancient Indian cultivators were not tied to the soil like the European serfs and were in a position to settle in a different state and that this right is indicated by such medieval texts as the *Bṛhannārādīya Purāṇa* (assigned to c. 750-900 A.D.), Vidyākara's *Subhāṣitaratnakōśa* (12th century) and the *Bāburnāmā* (16th century). We agree with this view and may quote various other texts in its favour.

But the author of the said paper then thinks that the *Upamitibhava-prapañcakathā* of Siddharṣi (960 A.D.) and a number of early medieval inscriptions indicate the existence of feudal serfdom and manorial villages in some parts of Northern India. In our opinion, this is due to misunderstanding of the evidence at our disposal. If the above contention would have been correct, we would not have found references to the system confined only to one work of Sanskrit literature.

According to a story in the *Upamitibhava-prapañcakathā*,<sup>2</sup> the entire population of a city which was the *bhukti* of a ruler named Karmapariṇāma was thrown by the latter into cells and kept there for a long time. Another ruler named Sadāgama liberated some of the wretched people and settled them elsewhere, while Karmapariṇāma's sister brought some people from a different town to occupy the places vacated by those liberated citizens. Two things have to be noticed in this story. Firstly, Karmapariṇāma was

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1. See Manu (VII. 188-19) cited above, p. 23. The ruler of a village enjoyed whatever the villagers have to pay to the king in the shape of *anna*, *pāna*, *indhana*, etc., while the rulers of ten, twenty, hundred and thousand villages should enjoy respectively one *kula* (two *hulas*, one *hala* being the area that can be cultivated by one plough in a year) of land, five *kulas* (10 *hulas*) of land, one village and one township (*daśī kulan-tu bhūjīta viṃśī pañca kulāni ca/grāmaḥ grāma-śat-ādhyakṣaḥ sahasrādhipatiḥ puram*).

2. XXXVIII. 87.

an oppressive ruler and his tyranny, like that of such Kashmirian monarchs as Śaṅkaraavarman and Harṣa, cannot be regarded as the normal behaviour of ancient Indian rulers. Secondly, Karmapariṇāma's sister brought some citizens for settling them in another city not by compulsion but by persuasion and allurements. It can be easily done even today. Muḥammad bin Tughluq Shāh had apparently no proprietary right over the person of those citizens of Delhi, whom he took to his new capital at Daulatābād (Devagiri).<sup>1</sup>

The Nirmand plate of Samudrasena (8th century) records the grant of a village to a body of Brāhmanas together with its inhabitants (*prativāsijana*).<sup>2</sup> But the reference is no doubt to the fact that the villagers who so long paid taxes to the donor would henceforth have to pay them to the donee. The grant of a village really means the transfer of the donor's revenue income, etc., from the villagers, to the donees. The gift of a village without such income would be useless to the donee. 'Granting a village' and 'granting a village together with the villagers' thus mean the same thing, and the latter certainly does not refer to the king's or landlord's proprietary right over the villagers' person. Because the donated land could be either inhabited or uninhabited, the grant of inhabited areas was sometimes stated to include the inhabitants (*i.e.* the right to collect taxes, etc., from them) specifically.

A Nanana plate of the 12th century records the grant or permanent allotment of certain persons (including songstresses, musicians and cultivators) to a deity,<sup>3</sup> and it has been supposed that 'these people were not slaves but independent persons'. There is however little doubt that most of them were slaves belonging to the well-known classes of *Devadāsas* and *Devadāsīs*. There was (and still is at least in some parts of the country) another class of professional people, e.g., the priests, barbers, washermen, carpenters, etc., who enjoyed village land on the condition of rendering service to the villagers. Such people enjoying state land or common land of a village could of course be allotted to the donee, and the transfer would not indicate any right of the king or landlord over the person of the people

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1. For some of the Sultān's unnatural acts and the transfer of capital, see *Camb. Hist. Ind.*, Vol. III, pp. 136ff.

2. *Corp. Ins. Ind.*, Vol. III, pp. 286ff.

3. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXXIII, pp. 244ff.

since the families would cease to be under the obligation of rendering service whenever they gave up the enjoyment of the property. They were therefore not tied to the soil in the feudal sense.

Sometimes agriculturist householders must have enjoyed State land or favours on the condition of working in the State farms or of cultivating State land on the basis of a share of the produce. Such cultivators could be allotted to the gift land since the State had a right over their services so long as they were enjoying State property or favours. There is no question of the State having any right over their person so long as they did not sell themselves to the State and become slaves of the latter.

In the charters of the Bhauma-Karas of Orissa, the grant of a village includes such subjects (*prakṛti*) as weavers, milkmen, vintners, etc.<sup>1</sup> It has been suggested that these records point to the king's right over the persons belonging to certain occupations and crafts. But, in our opinion, the revenue income from the weavers, etc., was the State monopoly and was not enjoyed by the non-privileged rent-paying landlords. That is why the State generally transferred its right in the cases of the donees who were privileged landlords. This is exactly similar to the transfer of the right over mango and some other trees in favour of the privileged tenants and landlords.<sup>2</sup>

The grants of the Eastern Gāṅga king Narasimha II generally allot to a gift village a few persons called *prajā* or subject. In one such case, we have reference to the following persons attached to the village: a conch-shell worker, a banker or merchant (*śreṣṭhin*), a goldsmith, two oilmen, a milkman and a potter belonging to this market or that.<sup>3</sup> It is difficult to believe, with the author of the paper cited above, that the king could have any right over the person of the bankers and merchants. Apparently, the revenue income from the said persons, who were not inhabitants of the gift village, was transferred to the donee in order to augment his income; otherwise, the merchants received certain concessions from the State and, in return, allowed themselves to be attached to the gift village or settled therein.

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1. Cf. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXVIII, p. 216; Vol. XXIX, p. 89.

2. See, e.g., *ibid.*, Vol. XXIX, p. 8, text line 42.

3. *Ibid.*, Vol. XXVIII, pp. 190-91.

The Assam plate<sup>1</sup> of Vallabharāja records the grant of seven villages to an almshouse together with the inhabitants (called *jana*) as well as with five persons (called *sahāya* or assistant) who were given along with their wives and children. If the king had equal right over the person of all the inhabitants of the villages, it would be difficult to explain the separate mention of the two classes. It appears that the assistants were slaves or that their families were enjoying State land for rendering particular services.

The expression *sa-kāru-kaṛṣaka-vaṇig-vāstanya* occurring in the Candella grants<sup>2</sup> means 'together with the houses or households of the artisans, agriculturists and merchants' and refers to the transference of the kings' right over the revenue income of the said classes of people in the donee's favour. Apparently certain classes of people such as the Brāhmaṇas were excluded from the transfer.

One set of the Anjaneri plates (8th century) states that a ruler first peopled a township and a few localities and then granted them in favour of a mercantile guild (*nagara*) headed by certain *śreṣṭhins*.<sup>3</sup> Likewise, an Eastern Gaṅga king of the 13th century granted to a Brāhmaṇa a township containing four palatial buildings and thirty houses inhabited by various citizens who included a number of merchants and people of different professions.<sup>4</sup> It is hardly possible to think that the rulers in these cases gave to the donees anything more than their income from the townships. The mention of the personal names of the merchants and professionals in the Gaṅga record would suggest that they were recently and specially brought from other places to people the township in question.

The above discussion is expected to cover the various inscriptions cited in the paper we have referred to above. The learned author further says, "As regards the status of the men said to have been attached to the donee as a religious grant, it is clear that they were not slaves but independent persons. They have also to be distinguished alike from serfs, if serfdom is conceived as a perpetual adherence to the soil of an estate owned by a lord. If performance of services for other persons is taken as the essence of

1. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. V, pp. 183 ff.

2. *Ibid.*, Vol. XXXII, pp. 121 ff.

3. *Ibid.*, Vol. XXV, p. 237.

4. *Ibid.*, Vol. XXVIII, p. 244.

the status of a serf, the men of our inscriptions may be described as serfs, but only in a restricted sense. The comparison is probably close with the villeins of the European manorial system which is associated with dependence of a population on a ruler consisting not in ownership extending over persons not in contractual agreements, but in various forms and degrees of subjection, chiefly regulated by custom." We are not inclined to agree with this view.

In our opinion, the persons in question, in most cases, enjoyed State land on the basis of a contract and were not compelled to serve the king or landlord when they were pleased to give up the possession of the property. Their obligation and status were not the same as those of the serfs or villeins.

The Indian king or landlord of the early period demanded free labour from the subjects, and the charters creating rent-free holdings specifically state that the right to unpaid labour from the tenants was transferred to the donee who was himself exempted from all obstructions or troubles no doubt including the supply of free labour to the king. But the obligation was not of the feudal type since nobody was tied to the soil. Even in the late medieval cases in which the kings of a particular area donated land on the condition that the donee would supply forces at the time of war, the latter seems to have been under no obligation when he relinquished the property.

Indian landlordism is sometimes confused with European feudalism. While, in the feudal system, the king as the lord of all land gave big estates to the barons on the condition of receiving service and help from the latter on particular occasions, the Indian kings, whose claim of ownership over the land under permanent tenants was never real, mostly created small estates in favour of Brāhmaṇas and religious institutions, and it was usually stated in clear terms in the charters that the donees were exempt from all obligations. Indeed, the donees of the majority of the Indian land grants were utterly unsuitable for offering military assistance to the donors who avowedly created the free holdings only for religious merit and fame. Thus feudalism is a misnomer in the Indian context.

## CHAPTER III

### PRIVILEGED ESTATES AND TENANTS

#### 1. *Rent-free Estates.*

When a village was made the subject of a grant, the charters of the Pāla kings of Eastern India usually specify that the gift land included the boundaries,<sup>1</sup> grass land and pasture land of the village (*śva-sīmā-tṛṇayūti-gocara-paryanta*), the surface of the ground (*tala*), the space above the ground (*uddeśa*), the dry land and waters of the village (*jala-sthala*) and the pits and barren spots (*gari-ṣara*), occasional mention being also made of grass and fish in the same context.<sup>2</sup> Many of these are also specified in the records of the Senas,<sup>3</sup> which occasionally include fallow and cultivated plots of land (*khila-nāla*). The Belabo plate of Bhojavarman mentions the majority of these and further includes salt pits (*lavaṇa*).<sup>4</sup> The Ramganj plate of Īśvaraghoṣa mentions most of these with the addition of the cow-house (*gokula*), market place and landing station (*haṭṭa-ghaṭṭa*).<sup>5</sup> Records of some rulers of the Himalayan region mention, besides boundaries and pasture lands, trees, orchards, springs and waterfalls (*vrkṣ-ārāṁ-odbheda-prasravaṇa*).<sup>6</sup> The charters of the Candellas include in the list such items as

1. The boundaries of the gift land were often clearly indicated or demarcated, though sometimes it was considered unnecessary to mention them in details because they were well-marked and were also well known to the people.

2. *Gauḍalekhamālā*, pp. 39, 61, 97, 154. The word *ṣara* is sometimes explained as a saline spot; but *sa-gari-ṣara* and *sa-lavaṇa* are both mentioned in the same epigraph in some cases (*Ins. Beng.*, Vol. III, p. 21; *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXXIII, p. 140).

3. *Ins. Beng.*, Vol. III, pp. 63, 74, 87, 96, 102, 112, 125, 137, 147.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 21.

5. *Ibid.*, pp. 153-54.

6. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXXI, pp. 281, 288, 296. According to the Sungal plate of king Viḍagdha of Chamba, the land was granted 'as far as its limits, grass, pounds and pasture ground; together with the fruit trees and with the water courses and channels; with fallow land and cultivated land' (*Indian Epigraphy*, p. 394).



temples and ramparts (*mandira-prākāra*) and mines (*khanī*) with special reference to deposits of iron and other metals (*loh-ādy-ākara*),<sup>1</sup> and sometimes also pits, road-crossings (*catuara*) and barren spots as well as salt pits.<sup>2</sup> They further refer to the entrance and exit of the gift land (*nirgama-praveśa*) and whatever else there may be within the boundaries (*śīm-āntargata-vastu*). Sometimes they also include ponds (*talla*), tanks, rivers and hills, the cow-houses, wood, bricks and stones, the dwellings of artisans, cultivators and traders, the domestic and wild animals, and the birds and aquatic beings.<sup>3</sup> In the Paramāra charters, mention is sometimes made of houses, house-sites, threshing floors, sites of threshing floors, *talabhedya* (possibly, waste land attached to the gift village), cow-houses, what is produced in the sky and is found under the earth, the temples, gardens, tanks, step-wells, wells, etc.<sup>4</sup> In some cases, the copper-plate grants of the early rulers of Assam refer to homestead land, low land, high land, waters, pasture land, *avakara* (probably, mounds), etc., besides the boundaries and the space above the ground.<sup>5</sup> In the records of the Gāhaḍavāla kings of U.P., we have, likewise, land and waters, iron mines and salt pits, the mahua and mango trees and woods, gardens, branches, grass land and pasture land as well as the space above the ground and the region under its surface.<sup>6</sup> In the copper-plate grants of the Imperial Gaṅgas of Orissa and in some other epigraphs of the region, special mention is made of the tortoise along with fish.<sup>7</sup> Some such regional traits can also be traced in certain other cases cited above. The Bhauma-Kara charters of Orissa specifically mention the subjects including weavers, milkmen, vintners, etc., as also the outposts in the villages, passes and ferry stations (*kheta-ghaṭṭa-nadītara-sthān-ādi-gulmaka*).<sup>8</sup> The reference to weavers, etc., in connection with the gift village reminds us of the charters of the Gaṅga king Narasimha II (1278-1305 A.D.), which usually mention certain persons as

1. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXXII, pp. 122, 125, 217.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 122; cf. p. 125.

3. *Ibid.*, pp. 122-23.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 155.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 291.

6. *Ibid.*, Vol. XXXIII, p. 179.

7. *Ibid.*, Vol. XXVIII, pp. 191, 194.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 216.

tenants (*prajā*) forming an *aiga* or part of the grant. Thus the second set of the Kendupatna plates mentions the following seven individuals : (1) Kālidāsa, a *śaṅkhakāra* (worker in conch-shells) of the Golāṇḍā-ḥaṭṭa, (2) Keso-śreṣṭhin of the Jayanagara-ḥaṭṭa, (3) Alālū, a goldsmith of the Kivalelo-ḥaṭṭa, (4) Vanamālin, an oilman of Arulālapura, (5) Anantāi, a milkman of the Vajjakeśvara-ḥaṭṭa, (6) Indū, a potter of the Painapaḍā-ḥaṭṭa, and (7) Vanainālin, an oilman of Jijjhāllapura.<sup>1</sup> Likewise, the Nagari plates of king Ananḡabhīma III (1211-39 A.D.) record the grant of a township covering 30 *vāṭis* (probably 600 acres) in Pūraṇa-grāma and Jayanagara-grāma containing four palace-like houses endowed with walls, *mukha-maṇḍapas* and *madhya-maṇḍapas* as well as thirty other houses inhabited by a number of citizens. The inhabitants of the township are stated to have included a perfumer, a worker in conch-shells, a splitter of wood (*pāṭakāra*), a goldsmith and a brazier as well as three sellers of betel leaves, one florist, one dealer in sugar (*guḍika*), two milkmen, two weavers, two oilmen, two potters and three fishermen. There were also a barber, some craftsman and a washerman. This list of people belonging to various communities and professions inhabiting the township of the thirteenth century throws welcome light on the socio-economic life of Orissa in the medieval period.<sup>2</sup>

We have seen above that salt was a royal monopoly according to many of the records referred to. It may be mentioned in this connection that a large number of early South Indian inscriptions, including those of the Śātavāhanas, speak of 'digging for salt' in the same context.<sup>3</sup> Sometimes sugar (*guḍa*) is added to salt, while, in its place, 'moist substances' (*klīmna-kreṇi*) is often mentioned. It appears that 'the moist substances' included sugar and toddy. Thus the word 'digging' (*khātaka*, *khanaka*) probably indicates both digging the earth and piercing certain trees. While sugar and toddy could be obtained from the date and palmyra palms, salt could be gathered from salt-water wells as also from certain plants. There is some evidence of the manufacture of salt from the salty earth by the landlords in the Varanasi region of U.P. as late as the nineteenth century. Water drawn from wells was poured on the field and, when it dried out, a

1. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXVIII, p. 189.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 244.

3. See *Select Inscriptions*, pp. 192, 194, 408, 414, 417, 422, 439.

finger's breadth of salt was found to have gathered on the surface.<sup>1</sup> In Eastern India, salt was made by the poor people, till the nineteenth century, by boiling, in water, the ashes of dried up banana plants, though this process does not appear to have involved digging or piercing.

The Basim plates of Vindhyaśakti II contain a passage which seems to indicate that the grant in question was made together with the platforms used for the collection of tolls (*mañca*) and important records in the custody of local officials (*mahākaraṇa*).<sup>2</sup> This suggests that, not only the local administrative machinery, but also the local archives were sometimes placed at the disposal of the donees of a gift village.

In the list of privileges conferred on the donees (landlords) in the records of Western and Central India and the Deccan, sometimes we find the mention of *āvāta*, *vāt-ādeya*, *kara-vāt-ottara*, *bhūt-opātta-pratyāya*, etc., which appear to refer to any income resulting from changes caused by nature and her agencies, e.g., cyclones, earthquakes, changes in the course of rivers, etc.<sup>3</sup> This would refer to accretion of land to the estate caused by natural agencies, anything brought to the land of the estate from neighbouring estates by storms, and similar other incomes.

In a large number of copper-plate charters, reference is made to the grant being made with the right over *nidhi* (treasure trove) and *upanidhi* (probably deposits or accumulations on the soil).<sup>4</sup> This *upanidhi* is called *nidhāna* or *nikṣepa* in some records,<sup>5</sup> although the word *nidhāna* is sometimes also used to indicate a fresh assessment of taxes.<sup>6</sup> When an estate was granted together with *nava-nidhāna*, the landlord was probably empowered to assess the taxes of the tenants afresh. *Nidhāna* is sometimes mentioned

1. *Select Inscriptions*, p. 488, note.

2. Sircar, *Indian Epigraphy*, p. 392.

3. See Altekar, *The Rāṣṭrakūṭas and Their Times*, p. 228; Sircar, *Indian Epigraphy*, p. 40. Sometimes we have *bhūta-pāta-pratyāya* which may also be a mistake for *bhūta-vāta-pratyāya* or *bhūt-opātta-pratyāya* (*Ep. Ind.*, Vol. III, p. 109; Sircar, *Indian Epigraphy* p. 398); cf. *Corp. Ins. Ind.*, Vol. III, pp. 137, 166, 179. In some cases, we have *vāta-bhūta* or *bhūta-vāta*.

4. *Corp. Ins. Ind.*, Vol. III, pp. 338, 346, 395 (*sa-nidhi-s-ōpanidhi*).

5. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXV, p. 139 (*sa-nidhi-nidhāna*); Vol. XXXII, p. 42 (*nidhi-nikṣepa*).

6. *Ind. Ant.*, Vol. VI, pp. 180 ff. (*nava-nidhāna-sahita*).

in association with *ālīpaka* or *alīyaka* which seems to mean 'income from bees (i.e. wax, honey, etc.)'.<sup>1</sup>

When a village was given to a party, the primary concern of the State was to prevent the donee from confiscating certain types of land therein, and a large number of charters mention in this context the plots of *devadāya* and *brahmadāya*, i.e. rent-free land in the possession of temples and Brāhmanas, which were to be excluded by the donees while exercising their rights of occupation.<sup>2</sup> Sometimes, such excluded plots of land are specified as *ratna-traya* and *rāja-sambhoga*.<sup>3</sup> *Ratna-traya* literally means the Buddhist *Triratna* or three jewels, viz. the Buddha, Dharma and Saṅgha. But gradually it came to be used in the sense of a Buddhist religious establishment where the three jewels were worshipped, and, later, it was also understood to mean a rent-free holding in the possession of a Buddhist religious establishment. The epigraphic passage referred to above has used the expression *ratna-traya* in the last of the three senses. *Rāja-sambhoga* literally means 'the king's enjoyment or possession'. Later, the expression was also understood to indicate 'State land, or State land attached to the king'.

That sometimes an existing rent-free holding was wrongly included in the gift land, for which the charter required correction at a later date, is suggested by the Madanpada plate of Viśvarūpasena of East Bengal.<sup>4</sup> The description of the gift land in this record (lines 43-46) is engraved on an erasure, clear traces of the original writing being still visible under many of the letters. In this re-engraved section, the gift land is stated to have been situated in the village called Piñjokāyhi which is the same as modern Pinjari near Madanpada (the findspot of the inscription) in the Kotlipada Pargana of the Faridpur District of East Pakistan. A portion of the village yielding an annual revenue income (*sām-li* = *sāmvatsarika-hiraṇya*) of 132 silver coins called *purāṇa* or *cūrṇi* was excluded, and the remainder yielding 500 [*purāṇas* or *cūrṇis*] per annum was made the subject of the grant. The smaller part of the village yielding 132 *purāṇas* was

1. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXXVI, p. 18.

2. Cf. *Corp. Ins. Ind.*, Vol. III, p. 179; *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXXV, p. 279 (*pūrva-pradatta-devadāya-brahmadāya-varjita*, etc.).

3. See *Gaṇḍakīkhamālā*, p. 154.

4. See *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXXIII, p. 318.

called Padāti-Śāpāmārka, apparently after the name of the *Pāik* called Śāpāmārka, and is stated to have belonged to the *āśrama* of the deity named Kandarapaśaṅkara.<sup>1</sup> It is further said that the donee received a second plot of land yielding 127 *purāṇas* or *cūrṇis* annually and situated in the village called Nāraṇḍapa-grāma belonging to the said *āśrama* of Kandarapaśaṅkara. This part of Nāraṇḍapa-grāma was the property of a dependant of the king (*śrakīya-pāliya-sa*); that is to say, it formed part of the *jāgīr* in the possession of one of the king's dependants. The above two plots of gift land were now given the name of Piñjorhīya-grāma.

It appears, from what is found in the record, that, in the original document, the whole village of Piñjokāṣṭhī was granted in favour of the donee of our charter and that, some time later when it was brought to the notice of the government that a part of the village belonged to the Kandarapaśaṅkara *āśrama*, the necessity of making a readjustment was felt and the donee's loss of 132 silver coins per year was then compensated by the gift of another piece of land yielding 127 silver coins per annum. The two plots of gift land were situated in two contiguous villages, and they were now made one unit under a modified name. This suggests that old grants of rent-free holdings were not usually violated by the State.

Sometimes fresh land was given to the donees in exchange for land granted previously for other reasons also. Thus a charter of the 18th regnal year of the Śātavāhana king Gautamīputra Śātakarṇi records the grant of 200 *nivartanas* of land situated in the village of West Kakhaḍī as a rent-free holding in favour of the Buddhist monks dwelling in a cave excavated in the Nasik hills.<sup>2</sup> But another charter of the same king, dated in his 24th regnal year, states that no people dwelt in the village of Kakhaḍī, so that the field could not be cultivated, and that, such being the case, an area of 100 *nivartanas* of State land attached to the king, which was situated in the suburbs of the district headquarters, was granted to the said monks instead.<sup>3</sup> Because there was dearth of labourers and cultivators at Kakhaḍī, the donees derived little benefit out of the original grant, and the government, being informed of the situation, ameliorated

1. The deity was probably named after Arirājamadanaśaṅkara Lakṣmaṇasena, the words *madana* and *kandarpa* being synonyms.

2. See *Select Inscriptions*, p. 192.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 194.

their grievances. But, whereas, in the case of the Madanpada plate, the old writing was erased in some parts to re-engrave a modified statement, in the present case, a fresh charter was issued in favour of the donees. This points to the eagerness of the State to ameliorate the legitimate grievances of the subjects.

Fresh charters were also issued when the original documents were somehow lost as otherwise a rent-free holding would be treated by the king's collectors of revenue as rent-paying. Thus both the Dubi and Nidhanpur copper-plate grants of king Bhāskaravarman of Kāmarūpa record the renewal of two grants originally issued by his great-great-grandfather Bhūti-varman. The Dubi plates say that the original copper-plate record became completely damaged so that the plates were melted for removing the old writing thereon and for reshaping them for the re-engraving of the fresh document.<sup>1</sup> The Nidhanpur copper-plate charter says that the fresh document was issued because the gift village had become rent-paying (*karada*) owing to the loss of the original charter.<sup>2</sup> Elsewhere it states that, because the document was prepared after the original one had been lost due to conflagration, the new writing of the fresh charter should not be regarded as a forgery.<sup>3</sup> Likewise, the Kurud plates of king Narendra state that a village was originally granted by the *Paramabhaṭṭarakapāda* (i.e. the overlord of Narendra's family), while he had been taking a bath in the waters of the holy Gaṅgā, in favour of a Brāhmaṇa, by means of a charter written on palmyra leaves, but that, as a result of that document being destroyed by a conflagration in the donee's house, Narendra regranted the village in favour of the original donee's son for the merit of the *Paramabhaṭṭarakapāda* since it was established by official investigation (*adhikaraṇ-āvadhāraṇā*) that the village had been continuously in the possession of the Brāhmaṇa family. The intervening period between the issue and renewal of this document is only one generation, whereas Bhūti-varman's grants were renewed by his great-great-grandson after five generations.

The above cases of renewal of old charters indicate the importance of

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1. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXX, p. 290.

2. *Kāmarūpaśāsanāvalī*, p. 17.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 27.

the charters which were required to justify the rent-free enjoyment of the estates in the donee's possession.

## 2. Partially privileged Estates.

A fact to be remembered is that all free-holders of estates, even when the latter were declared as free from taxes, did not enjoy the same privileges and exemptions. Thus many copper-plate charters say that the grants were made with the exclusion of *cora* (*caura*) or *cora-daṇḍa* and sometimes of *cora-drohaka*.<sup>1</sup> The expression *cora-daṇḍa* means 'fines from or punishment of the thieves and robbers', and the word *cora* and *caura* are technically used in the same sense. *Drohaka* means 'treason against the king', and the present context would suggest the meaning 'fines from or punishment of the traitors to the king'.

Thus the landlords, who were donees of the grants in which such conditions occur, had no power to deal with the cases of theft and treason in their estates, and it is stated in the documents that the king's *Cāṭas* and *Bhāṭas* (*Barkandāzes* and *Pāiks*) were allowed to enter into the estates in connection with such cases and not on any other occasion. But there are many charters in which the grants are stated to have been made with the right of *daṇḍa-daś-āparādha* (otherwise called *daś-āparādha* or *daś-āpacāra*) which refers to fines for 'ten offences', in which theft and robbery were apparently included.<sup>2</sup> In a number of East Indian grants, moreover, *daś-āparādha* or *daś-āpacāra* is mentioned together with the privilege of *cauroddheraṇa*, i.e. the right to deal with stolen goods recovered from thieves or with the recovery of such goods.<sup>3</sup> The expression, used in the same sense in certain East Indian records, is *sahya-daśāparādha* which suggests that the king was not to take cognizance of the commission of the ten offences in the donee's estate.<sup>4</sup> These records show that the landlords were not only empowered to punish thieves and robbers on their own account, but also to recover stolen property from them.

Moreover, the freedom from taxes, which was the chief characteristic

1. *Corp. Ins. Ind.*, Vol. III, pp. 96, 103, 116, 118, 122, 127.

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 189, 217.

3. *Caudalekhamālā*, pp. 39, 61, 97; Majumdar, *Ins. Beng.*, Vol. III, p. 5.

4. *Ins. Beng.*, Vol. III, pp. 21, 63, 74, 87, 96, 102.

of the *devadeya*, *brahmadeya* or *agrahāra* estates, did not mean exactly the same privilege to their holders in all parts of the country. Thus an inscription of the Māṭhara king Prabhañjanavarman of Kalinga records the gift of a locality as an *agrahāra*, but states at the same time that the annual rent (*kara*) was fixed for it at 200 *paṇas* probably equivalent to 16000 cowrie-shells.<sup>1</sup> The same amount is also mentioned in a charter of king Acaṇḍavarman of the said region as the annual dues payable to the king for a rent-free *agrahāra*.<sup>2</sup> This was of course a nominal or token tax.

A number of the above type of *śāsana*s sometimes called *kara-śāsana* or charters creating partially rent-paying holdings, have been traced among the early epigraphs of Orissa and Andhra Pradesh.<sup>3</sup> They refer to a piece of land either sold (the purchaser being allowed to enjoy certain privileges) or given away, but subject to the payment of a small tax regularly per annum. Thus, of the two charters of king Gayādatuṅga of Orissa, one has, "Torogrāma is made a *kara-śāsana* at nine *palas* of silver [per year]", while the other speaks of the fixation of *trīṇodaka* (literally 'tax for grass and water') for the gift land at four *palas* of silver without using the word *kara* or *kara-śāsana* in the context.<sup>4</sup> The word *trīṇodaka*, which was essentially a tax for the right to graze and water one's cattle in the pasture lands belonging to the State, has here the technical sense of a cess due to the king even when the gift land was declared to be revenue-free. There is also no doubt that the donee of 'the rent-free holding' mentioned in the second of Gayādatuṅga's charters referred to above had really to pay the annual tax of 4 *palas* of silver. Similar is the case with a charter of the Sulkī king Kulastambha, which states that the gift village was made a rent-free holding, though elsewhere *trīṇodaka* is stated to have been fixed for it at 2 *palas* of silver.<sup>5</sup> The use of the special term *trīṇodaka* in preference of *kara* points to the eagerness of some kings to represent a revenue-paying holding as a rent-free one as indicated by the *Mitākṣarā* cited above. But there are some records discovered in the same region, e.g., the grant of Prabhañjana-

1. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXX, pp. 114-15.

2. *Ind. His. Quart.*, Vol. XXIX, p. 290. The king's name was formerly read wrongly as *Caṇḍavarman*.

3. See Sircar, *Indian Epigraphy*, pp. 111 ff.

4. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXXIV, pp. 96 ff.

5. *Ibid.*, Vol. XII, pp. 156 ff.



varman mentioned above as well as certain charters of the Gaṅgas, Bhaṇjas and Somavamśis, which speak, in the same context, of *kara* and *rājakiya-pratyāya* (dues payable to the king), the charters being often called *kara-śāśana*. Such charters recording grants with the fixation of a small rent are rare outside Orissa and Andhra Pradesh. We have noticed only two rent-paying grants in other parts of the country, one being the Nesarika plates of the Rāṣṭrakūṭa king Govinda III (794-814 A.D.) and another the Bhaturiya inscription of king Rājyapāla (c. 908-40 A.D.) of the Pāla dynasty of Bengal and Bihar.<sup>1</sup> It seems that, but for the nominal tax, the gift land in such cases was otherwise treated as a completely rent-free holding.

The above discussion will show that there were three types of landlords, viz., (1) those who enjoyed complete freedom from the payment of taxes, (2) those whose estates were partially exempted from taxes so that they had to pay taxes at a concession rate, and (3) those who were not exempt from taxation. Some of the landlords of the first two classes enjoyed all the rights of the king in respect of his tenants, though there were cases in which a number of the customary privileges were withheld from many of them. The landlords of the third category must have also enjoyed certain privileges. But their nature is difficult to determine in the present state of our knowledge. We have suggested below that the owners of rent-paying estates were under the obligation of supplying certain articles to the king, but that the privileged landlords were free from such obligations.

### 3. Issue and Execution of Charters.

The king's declaration in respect of the grants is not similar in the records of the different dynasties or of various parts of the country. Among early inscriptions, while a Śaka epigraph refers to the grant being declared in the *nigama-sabhā* or meeting of the municipal council, certain Śātavāhana and Pallava charters record the donor's order addressed to the viceroy of the district concerned.<sup>2</sup> And, from this standpoint, copper-plate charters can be divided into two categories, viz., (1) those merely announcing that some land or a village was granted by the donor, and (2) those that contain

1. Sircar, *Indian Epigraphy*, pp. 113-14.

2. *Sel. Ins.*, pp. 158, 191-93, 434.

an order of the donor in respect of the grant addressed to certain people.<sup>1</sup> The second of the two classes can be broadly subdivided into four types, viz., (1) those in which the addressees are vaguely and generally indicated; (2) those in which the order is primarily addressed to the inhabitants of the gift village or the village wherein the gift land was situated or the district wherein the gift land or village was situated; (3) those in which the order is primarily addressed to the royal officer or officers or agents sometimes including the subordinate rulers, fief-holders, etc., and (4) those in which both the royal officers or agents, etc., and the inhabitants of the locality in question are mentioned.

The first of these classes is illustrated by the grants of the Cālukyas of Badami, in which there is a passage saying, "The king issued an order as follows". In the second category, the inhabitants of a village are referred to and, in certain cases, they are mentioned along with their social or administrative leaders (e.g. the Brāhmaṇas, the village headman, etc.) and often along with several village officials. Rarely the villagers of a whole district are stated to have been ordered after having been summoned (*samāhūya*). With reference to the villagers and local officials, the words used in the records appear to mean assembled from all sides. The reference may be to an announcement to the people, summoned by the beat of drums in respect of the grant, in the gift village or the village containing the gift land or at the headquarters of the district in which the gift land or village was situated. But often the reference is to the present and future subordinates and officers who would be associated with the area about the gift land as fief-holder or administrator. Sometimes the word *samupagata* is used in relation to the present and future (*varitamāna-bhaviṣyat*) subordinates and officers of the donor in the district containing the gift village, and it is difficult to understand *samupagata* in the sense of 'assembled' in such cases since the whole district seems to be too big a place for an assemblage while it is not easy to understand how the 'future' subordinates and officers also assembled. The same idea is expressed sometimes by the word *yathā-sambadhyamānaka*, 'as and when associated'. There are cases in which the king addresses his officers, subordinates and agents, often with reference to a district, as also the inhabitants of the village and local officials, and, while

1. For a discussion on such addressees, cf. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXXV, pp. 287 ff.

a word like *samupasthita*, *sāmanā-nivāsin*, *prativāsin* or *grāma-nivāsin* is used in respect of the villagers, an expression like *yathākāla-bhāvin*, *yathākāl-ādhyāsin*, *yathāsambadhyamānaka*, *upagata*, *samupagata* or *samupāgata* is used in connection with the king's officers and subordinates who are thus clearly distinguished from the former group. In such cases, words like *samupagata*, *samupāgata*, etc., appear to mean *yathāsambadhyamānaka*, the reference being to the officers and subordinates who were associated with the region in question for the time being and those who would be so associated in future. The list of the people (including the feudatory chiefs, their queens, officers and subordinates of all classes and mercenary soldiers of various nationalities), described as *samupagata* with reference to the gift land (not a very big area in some cases), is so big in the records of certain dynasties that an assemblage is physically impossible.

The importance of addressing the officers and subordinates of the time being and of the future is that it was some of them who might be appointed to administer the area in some capacity or might receive the area as a fief. The local people and officials including the donees' tenants had also to play their part in making the king's grant a success. Often the tenants were requested by the king to measure out the plot of land granted to the donee in their village outside the areas cultivated by them.<sup>1</sup>

The king's order in respect of the grant of a village or land was not always issued by the king himself, but was often conveyed through an intermediary who was usually a high officer, sometimes even a prince. He is generally called *Dūta* or *Dūtaka* (literally, 'the messenger') in North Indian records and *Ājñā*, *Ājñapti* or *Ājñāpti* (literally, 'the order', here 'the person carrying the order') in the charters of South India. When the order emanated from the king himself, the fact is indicated in passages like 'the order is from the donor himself,' 'the order is from the donor's own mouth', etc. The words *dūta*, *dūtaka*, *ājñā*, *ājñapti* and *ājñāpti* are generally translated as 'executor of a grant', though it is believed that the dignitary in question merely carried the king's order relating to the grant to the officials by whom the charter was later drawn up and delivered to the donees. But, in some cases, the *Dūtaka*'s function is indicated by the

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1. For such records, see *Select Inscriptions*, 1965, pp. 358 (text line 18 and note 6), 362 (text line 19), etc.

expression *pravēśita* suggesting that he also looked into the question of the entry of the charter into the donee's possession.<sup>1</sup> There is a case offered by the Jethwai plates,<sup>2</sup> in which one person is mentioned as the *Dūtaka* and a different person is stated to have written the document at the donor's order. It therefore appears that *Dūtaka* was not merely the carrier of the king's order, but the real executor of a charter at least in some areas of the country in certain ages of history.<sup>3</sup> The function of the officer seems to have been, at least in some cases, to help the donee in getting possession of the gift land. It is well known that most of the copper-plate grants contain the king's request to the local people to be helpful to the donee in every way and not to stand in the way of his enjoyment of the property.

#### 4. *Tenants and their Lot.*

In the specification of the landlords' status vis-a-vis the villagers, many records specifically advise the tenants to obey the orders of the donees of the charters and to pay to the latter whatever dues they owed to the king. Thus, in the grants of the kings of Uccakalpa, we have, "You yourselves (the tenants) shall render to him (the donee) the offering of the customary [dues of] *kara* in the shape of *bhāga* and *bhoga* as well as *hiraṇya* and shall be obedient to [his] commands."<sup>4</sup> Sometimes we have, "Wherefore, no one should behave so as to cause obstruction to this person (the donee) in enjoying it in accordance with the proper conditions of a grant to the Brāhmaṇas and cultivating it or causing it to be cultivated or assigning it to another;"<sup>5</sup> "Being aware of this, you should be obedient to their commands and should dwell in happiness, rendering them the customary *bhoga* and *bhāga*;"<sup>6</sup> etc.

There is some indication that all the tenants also did not enjoy the same status even in the same area, not to speak of different parts of the country. Thus a number of copper-plate grants state that the donee or landlord was allowed to enjoy the right of *udraṇiga* and *uparikara* (sometimes

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1. See Bhandarkar's List, Nos. 1501-02.

2. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXII, p. 109.

3. Cf. Sircar, *Indian Epigraphy*, pp. 143-44.

4. Cf. *Corp. Ins. Ind.*, Vol. III, pp. 118, 122, 127, 131; cf. p. 137.

5. *Ibid.*, pp. 171, 190.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 198.

wrongly written as *parikara*).<sup>1</sup> On the strength of the *Śāśvalakṣa* giving *udraṅga*, *uddhāra* and *udgrantha* as synonyms, it was suggested by some scholars that *udraṅga* was 'the share of the produce collected usually for the king'. But, in some cases, *udraṅga* and *bhāga* are mentioned separately in the list of privileges<sup>2</sup> and *bhāga* has to be understood in the sense of the king's share of the produce. Sometimes *udraṅga* has been supposed to be related to Marāṭhī *udhād* or *udhād-jamābandī* though *uddhāra* and *udhād* appear to be different words. *Uparikara* is supposed to mean 'a tax levied on cultivators who have no proprietary right over the soil'. This is because, in Marāṭhī, *uparī* means a temporary tenant or tenant at will according to Wilson's Glossary. Thus *udraṅga* may be the tax on permanent tenants. If such was the case, there was a distinction between two classes of tenants, viz. permanent and temporary, and the assessment of tax on the two classes must have been different.

It seems that *udraṅga* really means fixed taxes assessed on permanent tenants and *uparikara* those levies which were not fixed, the taxes collected from temporary tenants probably falling in this category. This seems to be supported by the fact that some inscriptions appear to mention *kṛpta* *upakṛpta* in place respectively of *udraṅga* and *uparikara*,<sup>3</sup> and the meaning of *kṛpta* is probably determined by a medieval inscription of the Kākatīya king Gaṇapati, which apparently uses the expressions *kṛpta-kara* and *kṛpta-śulka* in the senses respectively of fixed taxes and tolls.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, there was always the possibility of particular favours being granted by the king or landlord to particular tenants for services rendered or, at least, against payment of money.

We have some indication that, even without the king's favour, the tenants could sometimes attain to the position of landlords by their own efforts. Kalhaṇa's *Rājatarāṅgiṇī* attributes the following statement to the Kashmirian king Lalitāditya Muktāpīḍa who flourished in the eighth century A.D.: "Every care should be taken that there should not be left with the villagers more food supply than required for one year's consumption,

1. Cf. *Corp. Ins. Ind.*, Vol. III, pp. 97 (note), 98 (note), 105, 109, 120, 126, 132, 38, 170, 185, 189, 218, 257, 290.

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 166, 179.

3. *Ibid.*, pp. 238, 246.

4. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XII, pp. 193, 195.

nor more oxen than were wanted for the tillage of their fields; because, if they should keep more wealth, they would become, in a single year, very formidable *Ḍāmaras* and strong enough to neglect the commands of the king. When once the villagers obtain clothes, women, woollen blankets, food, ornaments, horses and houses, such as are fit for the people of the town ..... then a change for the worse in the subjects' fortune may be known for certain....."<sup>1</sup> And the great trouble the *Ḍāmaras* or the landed rural aristocracy caused to the State especially during the rule of weak kings is well known to the students of the early history of Kashmir.

Considering the attitude of Lalitāditya, it is no wonder that some unscrupulous Kashmirian rulers of later times followed an oppressive system of grinding taxation. Thus, when king Śaṅkaravarman (883-902 A. D.) drained the resources of the kingdom by futile military expeditions, he was driven to take exceptional measures for raising revenue and thereby caused great hardship to the people. The new offices called *aṭṭapātibhāga* (literally, 'share of the lord of the market') and *gṛhakṛtya* (literally, 'domestic affairs') were created by the king. The officer in charge of the former may have been entrusted with the collection of a variety of direct taxes on markets, shops, artificers, etc., while the officer in charge of the latter appears to have levied taxes on such domestic events as the ceremonies of marriage, sacred thread, first-ribe, etc. It is said that revenue for the *gṛhakṛtya* office was increased by deducting or adding to the proper weights, by imposing fines on the villages and by similar other imposts. There were, besides a treasurer, five newly appointed secretaries for the department. On the pretext that they were the king's share of the selling price, profits of the temples arising out of the sale of incense, sandalwood and other articles of worship were appropriated. Likewise, *agrahāra* villages in the possession of temples were resumed on the understanding that a fixed amount would be returned as *pratikara* (compensation) out of the income from the said village. The lands were then directly cultivated by the State, though the amount of compensation payable to the temples was reduced by diminishing the weight in the scales by one-third. No less than 64 temples were plundered straight away through special officers placed over them under the pretence of exercising supervision. Even

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1. *Op. cit.*, IV. 347-52.

more serious than the above was a kind of *ṛiṣṭi* (unpaid labour) called *rūḍhabhāroḍhi*, according to which villagers, who did not turn up to carry their allotted loads, were fined the value of the articles at enhanced rates, and the same fine was levied a second time in the next year from the village as a whole. The king introduced thirteen kinds of *corvée* of this type, which broke the backbone of the poor people. The villagers were further driven into poverty by levying contributions for the monthly pay, etc., of the *Sandhakas* and *Grāmakāyasthas* (*Paṭvārīs*) and by various other exactions.<sup>1</sup> The greediness of an unscrupulous king went even further during the reign of Harṣa (1089-1101 A. D.) who appointed an officer entitled *Devotpātananāyaka* (prefect for the overthrow of divine images) for the purpose of robbing temples of their metal images. As a result, there was soon no temple in the villages, towns and cities of Kashmir, which, with a few exceptions, was not despoiled of its images. It is strange that the statues of gods were defiled by pouring excrement and urine over their faces by heterodox naked mendicants who spat on them and dragged them along the roads by ropes round their ankles.<sup>2</sup> It is of course difficult to believe that king Harṣa could have done this if he was not suffering at least from partial insanity.

It has to be admitted that, among ancient Indian kings, there were both benevolent and tyrannical rulers. But Kalhaṇa's chronicle of Kashmir, which was composed about 1150 A. D. and is the only early work offering us a detailed connected account of the state of affairs in a particular region of India, shows very clearly that usually the number of worthless, profligate and wicked kings by far exceeded the few who had the subjects' welfare at heart. Indeed the sufferings of the people of ancient Kashmir due to floods and famines, to civil wars, to the unchecked rapacity of the collectors of revenue and to similar other causes were almost continuous. And this makes us diffident to believe that, except on rare occasions, the condition of the people of other parts of India was very considerably better. The popular belief about the existence of *Rāmarājya* (i.e. a State offering to the people all happiness and no misery)

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1. See Stein, *Kalhaṇa's Rājatarangīṇī*, (V. 165-81), trans., Vol. I, pp. 207 ff.

2. *Ibid.*, VII. 932-33, 1080-99.

in ancient India is no doubt largely a myth. Generally speaking, the condition of the people in the ancient Indian States was more or less similar to that in our Native States which were recently merged in the Indian Union, although these latter were not free from the influence of the Tenancy Acts passed by the Indo-British Government from time to time for the betterment of the tenants' lot. A study of the Acts gives one an idea about tenancy and landlordship in medieval India, and the position was similar in wide areas of the country even in the ancient period.



## CHAPTER IV

### BURDEN OF TAXES

#### 1. Taxes in Earlier Epigraphs.

That the tax burden on the early Indian villagers was heavy is more clearly indicated by medieval records than by those earlier in date. An analysis of the information about the king's privileges transferred to the landlord, supplied by various inscriptions, is expected to give a fair idea of the taxes and other obligations.

Some charters of the Śātavāhana king Gautamīputra Śātakarṇi (c. 106-30 A.D.) record grants of land together with all the *parihāras* (exemptions or privileges to be enjoyed by the donee) including the following: (1) *a-prāveśya* or freedom from the entry of royal agents for the collection of taxes, etc.; (2) *an-avamarśya* or freedom from troubles associated with unpaid labour or the entry of royal agents; (3) *a-lavaṇa-khātaka* or freedom from the land being dug up or the trees being pierced for salt, and (4) *a-rāṣṭra-sāhvinayika* or freedom from the administrative control to which the district comprising the gift land was subject. The king's officer in charge of the administration of the area was also instructed to endow the gift land with all the exemptions including the above.<sup>1</sup> There are Śātavāhana charters recording grant of a village together with *kāru-kara* (tax on artisans; less probably *kar-otkara* meaning 'major and minor taxes'), *deya* (land tax called *balī* or periodical offerings called *bhoga*) and *meya* (king's share of the produce called *bhīga*) or with the renunciation of all the rights of the king.<sup>2</sup>

The Mayidavolu plates<sup>3</sup> of the Pallava king Śivaskandavarman mention the following *parihāras* associated with the rent-free enjoyment of land: (1) *a-lavaṇa-khātaka*, (2) *a-rāṣṭra-sāhvinayika*, (3) *a-paramparā-*

1. Cf. *Select Inscriptions*, pp. 192, 194.

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 195, 198.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 435.

*balivārda*, (4) *a-bhaḥa-prāveśya*, and (5) *a-kūra-cullaka-vināśi-khaṭvā-saṁvāsa*. Of these, *a-bhaḥa-prāveśya* (freedom from the entry of the *bhaḥas* meaning *Pāiks*) is the same as *a-prāveśya* of the Śātavāhana epigraphs. *A-paramparā-balivārda* or the freedom from the obligation of supplying bullocks in succession refers to the obligation of the villagers to supply bullocks to the king's officers when the latter visited a village for official purpose in a bullock cart from a neighbouring village. *A-kūra-cullaka-vināśi-khaṭvā-saṁvāsa* indicates freedom of the landlord of the gift village or the privileged tenant of the gift land from the obligation of supplying to the royal officers on tour such articles as *kūra*, *cullaka*, *vināśin*, eat and shelter. *Kūra* and *cullaka* have been interpreted respectively as 'boiled rice' and 'pot' though they may actually mean 'unboiled rice' and 'a fire-place for cooking'. *Vināśin* may be the same as *vaināśika* indicating 'a slave or an attendant'. The Hirahadagalli plates<sup>1</sup> of the same Pallava king record the grant of land, with libation of water, for so long as the moon and the stars would endure, together with the eighteen kinds of exemptions including the following: (1) *a-kūra-cullaka-vināśi-khaṭvā-saṁvāsa*, (2) *a-dugdha-dadhi-grahaṇa*, (3) *a-rāśiṣṭra-sāṁvinayika*, (4) *a-lavaṇa-guḍa-kṣobha*, (5) *a-kara-viṣṭi-kauñjalya*, (6) *a-paramparā-balivārda-grahaṇa*, (7) *a-tṛṇa-kāṣṭha-grahaṇa* and (8) *a-harītaka-śāka-puṣpa-grahaṇa*. In the expression 'eighteen kinds of exemptions', 'eighteen' seems to be used in the sense of 'all' or 'various'. *A-lavaṇa-guḍa-kṣobha* or freedom from the trouble in respect of salt and sugar shows, as already indicated above, that sugar was a royal monopoly like salt and seems to refer to the practice of piercing trees for sugar. *A-dugdha-dadhi-grahaṇa*, *a-tṛṇa-kāṣṭha-grahaṇa* and *a-harītaka-śāka-puṣpa-grahaṇa* point to the freedom of the landlord or privileged tenant from the occasional supply of milk, curds, grass, wood, myrobalan, vegetables and flowers. The reference is apparently both to the periodical supply to be made to the king when demanded as well as to the touring officers. The mention of *kāṣṭha* or wood reminds us of trees, branches and shrubs mentioned in the list of privileges in medieval charters. *A-kara-viṣṭi-kauñjalya* refers to the freedom from *kara* (tax), *viṣṭi* (unpaid labour) and *kauñjalya* which seems to refer to the obligation of free supply of sour gruel (*kuñjala*) to the king's labourers working in the neighbourhood. The

1. *Sel. Ins.*, p. 438.

idea seems to be that the landlords or privileged tenants in the possession of rent-free holdings were exempted from certain supplies to be made to the king, which ordinary tenants and landlords of rent-paying estates were obliged to supply.

The Basim plates<sup>1</sup> of the Vākāṭaka king Vindhyaśakti II (close of the fourth century A.D.) speak of the following *parihāra* generally going with land granted to Brāhmaṇas well-versed in the four Vedas: (1) *a-rāṣṭra-sāhvinayika*, (2) *a-lavaṇa-klinna-khātaka*, (3) *a-hiraṇya-dhānya-praṇaya-pradeya*, (4) *a-puṣpa-kṣīra-grahaṇīya*, (5) *a-paramparā-baṭivarda*, (6) *a-vāra-siddhika*, (7) *a-carṁ-āṅgāraka*, (8) *a-bhaṭa-praveśya*, (9) *a-khaṭvā-cullaka-vaināsika*, (10) *a-karada*, (11) *a-vaha*, (12) *sa-nidhi*, (13) *s-opanidhi*, (14) *sa-kṛta-prānta* and (15) *sa-māñca-mahākaraṇa*. It has to be noticed that, while the epigraphs discussed earlier refer directly to exemptions, the Basim plates mention them together with certain privileges involving exemption. The word *klinna* in *a-lavaṇa-klinna-khātaka* probably means a moist commodity like sugar which, as we have seen, was obtained by boring certain trees like the palmyra palm. Technically, besides sugar, the word may indicate toddy, etc., as also we have suggested above. *A-hiraṇya-dhānya-praṇaya-pradeya* refers to freedom from the obligation of paying taxes in cash and kind as well as emergency imposts or occasional supplies of fruits, etc. This has been mentioned separately from *a-karada* indicating freedom from taxes generally. *A-vāra-siddhika* refers to the supply of free labour by the villages in turn, while *a-carṁ-āṅgāraka* indicates freedom from the obligation of supplying hide-seats and chareol to the touring royal officers encamped in the village. *A-vaha* refers to the obligation of supplying horses to or carrying the loads of the touring officers. *Sa-nidhi* and *s-opanidhi* refer to the privilege of enjoying treasures hidden under the surface of the earth and deposits or finds on the soil. While *sa-kṛta-prānta* shows that the gift village was granted together with its demarcated boundaries, *sa-māñca-mahākaraṇa* suggests that the grant was made with the platforms used by officers for the collection of tolls as well as with important records in the custody of local officers.

The Chammak plates<sup>2</sup> of the Vākāṭaka king Pravaraśena II (middle

1. Cf. *Select Inscriptions.*, pp. 408-09.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 422.

of the fifth century) enumerate the following privileges normally going with the rent-free holdings in the possession of learned Brāhmanas proficient in the four Vedas: (1) *a-kara-dāyiu*, (2) *a-bhaḥa-ccātra-prāvṛṣya*, (3) *a-paramparā-go-baḥivarda*, (4) *a-puṣpa-kṣīra-sandoḥa*, (5) *a-cāra-āsana-carm-āṅgāra*, (6) *a-lavaṇa-kinna-kreṇi-khanaka*, (7) *sarva-viṣṭi-parihāra-parihṛta*, (8) *sa-nidhi*, (9) *ī-panidhi*, (10) *sa-klpti-opakḥṭaka*, (11) *ā-candr-āditya-kālīya* and (12) *putra-pautr-ānugamaka*. Among these, *a-kara-dāyiu* is of course 'free from taxes in general', while *chātra* in *a-bhaḥa-ccātra-prāvṛṣya* (no entry from *Bhaḥas* and *Chātras*) literally means 'a bearer or user of the umbrella', though its technical meaning is a *Barkandāz* or the leader of the group of *Bhaḥas* or *Pāiks*. *Ga* or cow has been added to *baḥivarda* or bullock in *a-paramparā-go-baḥivarda* showing that cows were sometimes also requisitioned by the royal officers on tour in the villages. *A-cāra-āsana-carm-āṅgāra* refers to the free passage, free camping and free supply of hide-seats and charcoal, which the villagers were obliged to offer to the officers visiting the villages on tour. Sometimes *pāra* (ferrying of rivers) is found in place of *cāra*, i.e. movement or passage. *Kinna-kreṇi* in *a-lavaṇa-kinna-kreṇi-khanaka* is the same as *kinna* of the Basim plates referred to above. *Sa-klpti-opakḥṭas* appears to mean 'together with the fixed and unfixed imposts' or 'fixed taxes on the permanent tenants and varying taxes on the temporary tenants'. *Kḥṭa*, stated in the *Kaṇṭilīya Arthāśāstra*<sup>1</sup> to have been payable by harbours and villages (probably not 'villages near harbours' as it has sometimes been interpreted), was one of the principal sources of revenue, while the Motupalli inscription of the thirteenth century A.D. mentions *kḥṭa-kara* and *kḥṭa-śulka* apparently in the senses of 'fixed tax' and 'fixed tolls' respectively, as already indicated above. *Ā-candr-āditya-kālīya* (to last as long as the moon and sun endure) and *putra-pautr-ānugamaka* (to pass to sons and grandsons) refer to the permanent and hereditary nature of the grant. *A-paśu-medhya* (free from the obligation of supplying goats, etc., for sacrifice) is sometimes added to the above list of privileges in the charters of the Vākāpakas.<sup>2</sup>

The Vilavatti grant of the Pallava king Simhavarman of the sixth century A.D. has the following passage: "Whichever taxes are realisable in

1. II. vi.

2. *Sel. Ins.*, p. 414.

this gift village such as *laha-carma-kar-āpaṇa* (taxes from the shops maintained by metal workers and leather workers), *paṭṭakāra* (professional tax from silk weavers), *prāvāraṇara* (tax for the maintenance of spies), *rajju* (tax for the maintenance of the surveyors), *pratihāra* (tax for the maintenance of gate-keepers collecting tolls or for entry into the royal palace), *āpaṇājīvika* (tax from shop-keepers), etc., as also the dues from the *nāhala* (outcasts), *mukhadharaka* (masked actors), *kūpadarśaka* (water-diviners), *tantravāya* (weavers), *dyūta* (gambling), *viāha* (marriage) and *nāpita* (barbers) and the cess payable by the artisans who enjoy land endowed with all exemptions—all such taxes due to us have been given to this donee as *brahmadeya*.<sup>1</sup> The cess payable by the artisans who were in possession of rent-free holdings reminds us of the token tax payable by the owners of *agrahāras* in some parts of the country.

In the Mankuni-Sankheda plates,<sup>2</sup> we have (1) 'together with *śibara* (also called *śebara*, *śaivara*, etc., the same as Marāṭhī *śerī* or arable land originally excluded from the village assessment according to Wilson's Glossary)', (2) 'together with *udraṅga* (fixed tax or the tax on permanent tenants)' and (3) 'excluding the income resulting from *bhūta* (changes due to earthquakes, etc.) and *vāta* (cyclones)'. The copper-plate inscriptions of the Early Kadambas sometimes mention such privileges as (1) *a-bhaṭa-praveśa*, (2) *antaḥkara-viṣṭika* (right to enjoy the internal income or revenue as well as free labour), (3) *parihṛta-paṅg-utkoṭa* (exempted from *paṅga* and *utkoṭa*), (4) *uñcha-karabhāṣṭr-ādi-vivarjita* (free from the burden of *uñcha* or the collection of small quantities of grains per measure as well as *kara* or taxes).<sup>3</sup> *Paṅga* is a Dravidian word often found in Telugu inscriptions in the sense of taxes and explained in Brown's *Telugu-English Dictionary* as a tax in the shape of one-fourth of the produce collected in olden times by the government on lands in the possession of gods and Brāhmaṇas.<sup>4</sup> *Utkoṭa* is the Sanskritised form of the well-known Prakrit word *ukkoṭa* which means the same thing as Persian *naḡrānā* or presents to be made to the king

1. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXIV, pp. 298, 303.

2. *Gadre, Imp. Ins. Bar. St.*, Vol. I, p. 6.

3. *Sircar, The Successors of the Śālavāhanas*, pp. 263, 266, 269. Sometimes an *agrahāra* is stated to have been made free from *daṇḍa*, *viṣṭi* and *kara* (*ibid.*, p. 293) and from *khaṭvā*, *vīsa* and *adana* (*ibid.*, p. 307).

4. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXXIII, p. 55.

and others.<sup>1</sup> In the Telugu records of the medieval period, *paṇḍa* is sometimes mentioned along with other levies bearing Dravidian names like *puṭṭi*, *māḍolu* and *kānika* and Sanskrit names like *upakṣiti* and *darśanā*.<sup>2</sup> *Puṭṭi* is probably 'a fee of two handfuls from each *puṭṭi* measure of grain paid to the village servants' and *kānika* 'a present from an inferior to a superior'. *Māḍalu* probably refers to the surrender of half of the produce. *Upakṣiti* may be a tax on uncultivated land and *darśanā* a levy for the supervision of partition of land and other property.

## 2. Taxes in Later Epigraphs.

The Banskhera plate<sup>3</sup> of king Harṣavardhana Śīlāditya (606-47 A.D.) simply states that a village was granted in favour of two Brāhmaṇas as an *agrahāra* (rent-free holding usually in the possession of Brāhmaṇas) in accordance with the custom governing its acceptance by Brāhmaṇas, so that the customary privileges going with such holdings remained understood. But the villagers were asked to be obedient to the doaees and to pay them the usual dues (*pratyāya*) including *tulya-meya*, *bhūga-bhoga-kara*, *hiraṇya*, etc., which have already been explained.

A charter<sup>4</sup> of the Guhila dynasty of Rajasthan gives us the following list: (1) 'together with *śevara* (the same as *śibara*, etc., explained above)', (2) 'together with the income resulting from *bhūta*', (3) 'together with the dues called *hiraṇya*', (4) 'together with *bhoga* and *bhūga*', (5) 'together with all imposts (*ādāna*)', (6) *a-cāṭa-bhaṭa-prāveśya*, etc.

The Paithan plates<sup>5</sup> of the Rāṣṭrakūṭa king Govinda III (794-814 A.D.) has: (1) *s-odraṅga* (together with the fixed taxes or the taxes on permanent tenants), (2) *sa-parikara*, (same as *s-oparikara*, together with occasional taxes or the taxes on temporary tenants), (3) *sa-daś-āparādha* (together with the power to deal with cases involving the ten offences), (4) *sa-bhūtapāṭa-pratyāya* (the same as *sa-bhūt-opāṭa-pratyāya* or *sa-bhūta-pāṭa-pratyāya*, together with the income resulting from earthquakes, etc.), (5) *s-optadyamāna-viṣṭika* (together with the right to utilise unpaid labour whenever due), (6) *sa-dhānya-*

1. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXXIII, p. 56.

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 55-56.

3. *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 414.

4. *Ibid.*, Vol. XXXIV, p. 176.

5. *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 109.

*hiraṇy-ādeya* (together with the dues payable in kind and in cash), (7) *a-cāṭa-bhaṭa-prāveśya* (free from the entry of *Barkandāzes* and *Pāiks*), (8) 'without the jurisdiction of any royal officer',<sup>1</sup> (9) 'to last as long as the moon, the sun, the oceans, the rivers and the hills would endure', (10) 'together with *abhyantara-siddhi* (internal income or revenue)' and (11) 'in accordance with the *bhūmicchidra-nyāya* (principle of the fallow land or the first cultivation of land)'.

The Anasui plates<sup>2</sup> of Śilāditya III mention: (1) 'together with *udraṅga*', (2) 'together with *uparikara*', (3) 'together with the income resulting from *bhūta* and *vāta*', (4) 'together with the levy (*ādāna*) of *dhānya* and *hiraṇya*', (5) 'together with power to deal with the ten offences', (6) 'together with unpaid labour that may fall due', (7) 'not to be interfered with by any royal officer', (8) 'excluding previously granted *devadeya*, *brahmadeya* and *brāhmaṇaviṃśati* (partially rent-free holding of a Brāhmaṇa entitled to enjoy twenty per cent of the revenue)' and (9) 'given in accordance with *bhūmicchidra-nyāya*'.

A copper-plate charter<sup>3</sup> of the Śilāhāra king Aparājita, dated 993 A.D., records the grant of a *pallikā* together with the following privileges: (1) *ardha-bhoga-bhāga-samanvita* (enjoying only half of the *bhoga* and *bhāga* due to the king), (2) *sa-vṛkṣa-mālākula* (together with all kinds of trees), (3) *sva-sīmā-paryanta*, (4) *sa-kāṣṭha-tṛṇ-ādika*, (5) *sa-daṇḍa-daś-āparādha*, (6) 'excluding previously granted *devadāya* and *brahmadāya*', (7) *sarv-otpatti-yukta* (together with all kinds of produce), etc. The reference to *sarv-otpatti* seems to suggest that the ordinary tenants were not allowed to produce whatever crops they liked. This reminds us of the royal monopoly of certain plants already discussed above. Another charter<sup>4</sup> of the same king gives: (1) 'together with *udraṅga*', (2) 'together with *parikara* (*uparikara*)', (3) 'excluding *pradhāna-nidhān-aikadoṣa* (probably, considerable deposits or accumulations on the soil and power to deal with murder)', (4) 'including all other *daṇḍa-doṣas* (fines and exactions) like *aputra* (confiscation of the property of one who dies without leaving an heir), *ālīyaka*, *kumārī-sāhasa*, etc.', (5)

1. *Samasta-rājakiyānām-a-hasta-prakṣepaṇīya* is the same as *samasta-rājakiyānām-āprāveśya* = *rāja-sevakānāṃ vasati-daṇḍa-prayāṇa-daṇḍau na staḥ* etc., of other records. See *Ind. Ant.*, Vol. XIII, p. 117; Vol. XIV, p. 318.

2. Gadre, *Important Inscriptions of the Baroda State*, Vol. I, pp. 23-24.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 52.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 61.

'excluding previously granted *devadāya* and *brahmadāya*', (6) 'together with all the sources of income (*īya-sthāna*)', (7) 'together with all the produces', (8) *a-cāṭa-bhaṭa-praveśa*, (9) *a-pariṣanthanīya* (free from obstructions), (10) 'together with all *abhayaṅtara-siddhi*', etc.

Among the copper-plate grants of the Pāla kings of Eastern India, which offer more or less the same list of privileges, the Manahali plate<sup>1</sup> of Madanapāla has the following list: (1) *sva-sīmā-tṛṇayūti-gocara-paryanta* (including its boundaries, grass land and pasture land), (2) *sa-tala* (together with the surface of the land), (3) *sa-jala-sthala* (together with land and water), (4) *s-āmra-madhūka* (together with the mango and mahua trees), (5) *s-oddēśa* (together with the space above the surface), (6) *sa-gart-oṣara* (together with pits and barren land), (7) *sa-jhāṭa-viṣṭapa* (together with shrubs and branches), (8) (*sa-daś-āparādha* or *sa-daś-āpacāra* (together with the power to deal with cases involving the ten offences), (9) *sa-caur-oddharaṇika* (together with the power to recover stolen goods), (10) *parihṛta-sarva-piḍa* (free from all obstructions, including the supply of free labour), (11) *a-cāṭa-bhaṭa-praveśa* (free from the entry of *Borkandāzes* and *Pāiks*), (12) *a-kiñcit-pragrāhya* (completely free from taxes), (13) *bhāgabhogakara-hirany-ādi-pratyāya-sameta* (together with such dues as the *bhāgabhogakara*, *hiranya* and others), (14) *ratnatraya-rājasambhoga-varjita* (without the lands belonging to Buddhist establishments and the king), (15) 'given in accordance with the *bhūmicchidra-nyāya* (the principle of the fallow land or the first cultivation of land)' and (16) 'permanently given for as long as the moon, the sun and the earth will endure.'

In the records of the Caulukyās of Gujarat, we have: (1) *ṛkṣa-mālā-kula*, (2) *kāṣṭha-tṛṇ-odak-opeta*, (3) *sa-hiranya-bhāga-bhoga*, (4) *sa-daṇḍa-daś-āparādha*, (5) *sarvadāya* (*sarv-ādāya*)-*sameta*, (6) *nava-nidhāna-sameta*, (7) *pūrva-pradatta-devadāya brahmadāya-varja*, etc.<sup>2</sup>

The following privileges are enumerated in the charters of the Bhauma-Karas of Orissa : (1) *s-oddēśa* (together with the space above the ground), (2) *sa-tantuṣāya-gokṣa-śaundik-ādi-prakṛtika* (together with such subjects as the weavers, the milkmen, the vintners and others), (3) *sa-kheṭa-ghaṭa-nadītarasthān-ādi-gulmaḥ* (together with the outposts at the villages, passes,

1. *Gaudalekhamālā*, p. 154.

2. Majumdar, A.K., *The Caulukyās of Gujarat*, pp. 247-48.



ferry stations and other places), (4) *sarva-pīḍā-varjita* (without any obstacle, especially in respect of the supply of free labour), (5) 'without further use of the pen (i.e. without the power of alienation)', (6) 'given in accordance the *bhūmicchidrapidhāna-nyāya* (the principle of the reclamation of fallow land)' and (7) 'given to last as long as the moon, the sun and the earth endure'.<sup>1</sup> The nature of the taxes to be realised by the donees is, however, not clear from the above privileges.

The Sungal plate<sup>2</sup> of king Vidagdha (earlier half of the eleventh century A.D.) of Chamba mentions the following privileges: (1) *śva-sīmā-tṛṇa-goyūthi-gocara-paryanta* (as far as its limits, grass land, pounds and pasture ground), (2) *sa-vanaspady-udak-āśihāra-kullaka-pāniya-sameta* (together with fruit trees and with the various water courses and channels), (3) *s-āgama-nirgama-praveśa* (with approaches, ingress and egress), (4) *sakhila-potāya* (with fallow and cultivated land), (5) *sa-daś-āparādha* (with fines for the ten offences), (6) *putra-pautr-ādy-anvay-opabhogya* (to be enjoyed by the succession of sons, grandsons and so forth), (7) *anācchedya* (uncurtailable), (8) *a-paripanthya* (not to be opposed), (9) *a-cāṭa-bhaṭa-praveśa* (not be entered by the *Cāṭas* and *Bhaṭas* for the collection of taxes, etc.), (10) *a-kiñcit-kara* (fully free from taxes), and (11) *anāhāra* (inalienable). It is difficult to say whether *anāhāra* curtails the donee's power of alienation or is a guarantee that the land would not be confiscated by the State at least under ordinary circumstances. The charter further enjoins the tenants of the gift village to deliver to the donee dues like *bhāga*, *bhoga*, etc., and the king's *Cāṭas* and *Bhaṭas* are ordered not to enter into the donee's house, to let his vegetables be grazed on, to cut his ripe crops or crush his sugarcane, to take *rocika* and *ciṭolā* from him, to take cow's milk from him, to carry off his stools, benches or couches, and to seize his wood, fuel, grass, chaff, etc. It is also ordered that not even the slightest oppression or vexation should be caused by anybody to the donee or to his ploughmen, cowherds, maids, servants and dependants. *Rocika* and *ciṭolā* were levies, the nature of which is uncertain. But the exemptions enumerated in the record make it clear that the tenants were often subjected to considerable harassment.

1. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXIX, p. 89.

2. Vogel, *Antiquities of Chamba State*, Part I, pp. 167-69.

The Semra plate<sup>1</sup> of the Candella king Paramardin mention the following privileges: (1) *sa-jala-sthala* (with water and land), (2) *sa-sthāvara-jāṅgama* (with the movable and immovable belongings), (3) *sva-sīmā-śvachhinna* (defined by the boundaries), (4) *s-ādha-ūrdhva* (with that which is below and above the ground), (5) *bhūta-bhaviṣyad-varṇamāna-niḥśeṣ-ādāya-sahita* (with all the past, future and present imposts) and (6) *pratiṣiddha-cāṭi-ādi-praveśa* (with entrance forbidden for the *Cāṭas* and others for the collection of taxes, etc.). The villagers are ordered to bring to the donees the royal share of the crops, the periodical offerings payable to the king and everything else. It is also enjoined that nobody should cause any hindrance to the donees if they enjoy, cultivate, cause to be cultivated, give away, mortgage or sell the gift villages together with all their plants (e.g. *asana*, sugarcane, etc.), forests, hollows, deposits, mines of metal, etc., and cow-houses as well as with all other objects found within the boundaries and with external and internal incomes.

In the charters<sup>2</sup> of the Gāhaḍavāla kings of U. P., we have the privileges enumerated as follows: (1) *sa-jala-sthala* (together with land and water), (2) *sa-loha-lavaṇ-ākara* (together with metal and salt mines), (3) *sa-matsy-ākara* (together with the sources of fish) (4) *sa-parṇākara* (together with fields producing betel leaves), (5) *sa-gort-oṣara* (together with pits and barren lands), (6) *sa-madhūka-cūṭa-vana-vāṭikā-viṣṭapa-tṛṇayūti-gocara-paryanta* (together with mahua and mango trees, woods, gardens and branches and including grass lands and pasture grounds), (7) *s-ordhu-ādhaḥ* (together with what is above and below the surface of the earth), (8) *caturāṅghāṭa-viśuddha* (with the four boundaries demarcated) and (9) *sva-sīmā-paryanta* (including the boundaries). They also give us the following list of dues (*ādāya*): (1) *bhāga-bhoga-kara*, (2) *pravaṇikara*, (3) *kūṭaka* and others, while (4) *turuṣka-daṇḍa* and (5) *kumāragadyāṇaka* are given in some records in place of *kūṭaka*, and also (6) *hiraṇya*, (7) *jalakara*, (8) *gokara*, (9) *nidhi*, (10) *nikṣepa*, (11) *yamalakambalin*, etc., are occasionally introduced in the list. These taxes are in some epigraphs characterised as belonging to the two categories, some of them being *niyata* (fixed or regular) and others *anīyata* (occasional or irregular). Of the

1. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. IV, pp. 155-56.

2. *Ibid.*, 101, 103, 106, 109, 114, 116-17, 120, 124, 129.

various taxes, *pravaṇikara* is usually understood in the sense of a levy on the merchants. *Turuṣka-daṇḍa*, which may be compared with *Āndhra-daṇḍa* and *tiṅgula-daṇḍa* (taxes associated with the Āndhras and Tamilians) met with in the inscriptions of the Kannaḍa-speaking areas,<sup>1</sup> was probably a tax levied on the Muhammadans or for the maintenance of special forces for defending the subjects from Muhammadan attacks, while *kumāra-gadyāṇa* (the same as *kumara-kaccīna* of Tamil inscriptions), appears to have been a levy of one *gadyāṇa* (i.e. the silver coin weighing 48 *ratīs*) per family on the occasion of a prince's birth. *Jalakara* (literally, 'water tax') was paid for fishing rights, etc., in tanks, lakes and rivers. *Gokara* (literally, 'cattle tax') may have been a grazing levy. *Nidhi* and *nikṣepa* (the same as *upanidhi* and *nidhāna*) were respectively the treasure hidden in the ground and deposits or finds on the soil occasionally discovered. *Tamalakambalin*, found in the records in various corrupt forms, was payable for the possession of race-bullocks. The meaning of *kūṭaka* is doubtful.

In the charters of the Senas of Bengal, the gift land usually carried the following privileges with it : (1) *sa-jhāṭa-viṭapa* (together with bushes and branches), (2) *sa-jala-sthala* (together with water and land), (3) *sa-gart-oṣara* (together with pits and barren lands), (4) *sa-guvāka-nārikela* (together with arecanut and coconut palms), (5) *sahya-daś-āparādha* (with the ten offences tolerated, i. e. no cognisance to be taken by the State of the occurrence of the ten offences in the gift village), (7) *parihṭa-sarva-pīḍa* (exempted from all troubles including the supply of free labour), (8) *a-caṭṭa-bhaṭṭa-praveśa* (the same as *a-cāṭa-bhaṭṭa-praveśa*, not to be entered by the *Barkandāzes* and *Pāiks*), (9) *a-kiñcit-pragrāhya* (free from all taxation) and (10) *tṛṇayūti-gocara-paryanta* (including the grass lands and pasture grounds).<sup>2</sup> Of course, sometimes *sa-khila-nāla* (together with fallow and cultivated lands) is added to the list, and it is also stated that the donees were entitled to raise temples and excavate tanks in the gift land as well as to plant betelnut and coconut palms,<sup>3</sup> while the charters of the Candrā kings generally add *s-āmra-panasa* (together with mango and

1. *A. R. Ep.*, 1934-35, B. K. Nos. 153-54. *Malla-kara* of Nepal inscriptions was probably not associated with the Malla people, but was a profession tax on the wrestlers.

2. Majumdar, *Ins. Beng.*, Vol. III, p. 104, etc.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 147.

jackfruit trees).<sup>1</sup> But, in these cases, complete freedom from all levies is indicated by *a-kiñcit-pragrāhya* without elaboration.

The Kalegnon plates<sup>2</sup> (1261 A. D.) of the Yādava king Mahādeva refer to the grant of land together with (1) *śulka* (tolls), (2) *daṇḍa* (fines probably relating to the ten offences), (3) *dāṇa* (probably, customs duties on particular objects, or the king's grain share), (4) *kṛuka* (profession tax on the artisans and craftsmen), (5) *maulika* (the principal or main tax, or perquisites of hereditary officers), (6) *śrotra* (probably, a tax in kind collected by a lessee of State land from the cultivators), (7) *nidhi* (treasure-trove), (8) *nikṣēpa* (deposits or accumulations on the soil), (9) *jala* (fishing rights in the waters) and (10) *pṛṣṭhā* (quarrying rights in the hills), with which *tejaḥ-svāmya* is associated and the whole group seems to be regarded as included in *aṣṭa-bhoga*. It is further stated that the gift land was not to be pointed out even with a finger by the subordinate rulers and royal officers and that the grant was made with the libation of 'water with gold and rice'. While *tejaḥ-svāmya* means 'ownership with authority or complete control', it seems that the privileges included here in the *aṣṭa-bhoga* or eight ways of enjoyment are not less than eleven, so that *aṣṭa-bhoga* mentioned in many records of the Deccan, really indicates privileges of the landlord, roughly grouped into eight classes. In the records of the Vijayanagara kings, the eight *bhogas* appear to be enumerated as (1) *nidhi* (treasure-trove), (2) *nikṣēpa* (the same as *upanidhi* or *nidhāna*, i.e. deposits or accumulations on the soil), (3) *jala* (waters, i.e. fishing rights), (4) *pṛṣṭhā* (hills, i.e. quarrying rights), (5) *akṣīṇin* (actual income), (6) *āgāmin* (future income), (7) *siddha* (income from land already under cultivation) and (8) *sādhya* (land that may be brought under cultivation in future).<sup>3</sup>

*Aṣṭa-bhoga* is sometimes also enumerated as *nidhi*, *nikṣēpa*, *akṣīṇa*, *āgāmin*, *sañcīta*, *jala*, *taru* and *pṛṣṭhā*, or as *vikraya*, *dāna*, *vinimaya*, *jala*, *taru*, *pṛṣṭhā*, *nidhi* and *nikṣēpa* or as *nidhi*, *nikṣēpa*, *jalāmṛta*, *pṛṣṭhā*, *akṣīṇin*, *āgāmin*, *siddha* and *sādhya*.<sup>4</sup> It may be mentioned in this connection that sometimes reference is made to the attainment of *aṣṭa-bhoga-tejaḥsvāmya* by

1. Majumdar, *Ins. Beng.*, p. 8.

2. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXXII, p. 42.

3. *Ibid.*, Vol. III, pp. 123, 245.

4. *JAHRS*, Vol. X, p. 124 ; T. N. Subramanian, *South Indian Temple Inscriptions*, Vol. III, Glossary, s. v. *aṣṭa-bhoga*.

means of purchase (*aṣṭabhoga-lejaḥsvāmyāñ-ca krayeṇ-ādāya*).<sup>1</sup> There are also cases wherein *aṣṭabhoga-lejaḥsvāmya-daṇḍa-śulka-yukta* is mentioned along with *nidhi-nikṣēpa-pāṣāṇ-ārām-ādi-catuprakāra-bīraṇapāṭrikh-āya-sahita*.<sup>2</sup> The separate mention of the two groups suggests that sometimes *aṣṭa-bhoga* was taken to indicate particular kinds of proprietary rights. The fiscal terms *bīraṇa* and *pāṭrikh-āya* are not Sanskrit. They stand respectively for Sanskrit *vīra-paṇa* (dues payable for the maintenance of armed constables) and *pāṭrikṣak-āya* (income from receipts of the examiner of coins).

There are some interesting lists of the landlord's privileges in certain medieval charters of the kings of Orissa, such as the Balijhari plates<sup>3</sup> of the Somavamśi king Uddyotakesarin, the Kelgan plates<sup>4</sup> of Kumāra Someśvara of the same dynasty and the Siddheswar inscription<sup>5</sup> of the Gaṅga king Narasiṃha IV. The Balijhari plates, besides mentioning (1) *sa-gart-oṣara*, (2) *catuḥ-sīm-āvacchinra*, (3) *sīsu-madhūka-lāla-prabhṛti-nānā-vṛkṣa-sameta*, (4) *sa-nidhi*, (5) *s-opanidhi*, (6) *sa-pratihāra* (together with the tax for entry into the royal place or the maintenance of the *Pratihāras* or gate-keepers), (7) *sarva-vādhā-vicajita* and (8) *sarva-oparikar-ādāna-sahita*, mentions the freedom of the gift land from the following taxes realisable in future: (1) *hasti-daṇḍa* (tax payable for the maintenance of elephants), (2) *vara-balīvarda* (tax payable for the possession of race-bullocks), (3) *coṭāla* (meaning uncertain) (4) *arthārūṇ* (probably, levy on the amounts lent out by money-lenders), (5) *pratyarthārūṇ* (probably, levy on the amounts of loan realised by the money-lenders), (6) *adaltā* (probably, levy on arrears of taxes or fines), (7) *padātijīva* (tax for the maintenance of *Pāikṣ*), (8) *ahi-daṇḍa* (tax for the maintenance of snake charmers, or profession tax on the snake-charmers), (9) *āturā-vagḍi* (probably, 'pellet for the sick' meaning a levy for the treatment of the king when he is sick), (10) *bandha-daṇḍa* (fine in lieu of imprisonment), (11) *vijaya-vandāpanī* (*nazrānā* to be paid to the king on his return from a victorious campaign), (12) *mārgaṇika* (transit duties), and others. Likewise, the Kelgan plates have, besides (1) *prasiddha-catuhṣīm-āvacchinna*, (2) *sa-jala-sthala*, (3) *sa-matsya-*

1. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXIII, p. 31.

2. *Ind. Ant.*, Vol. XIX, p. 247.

3. *Journ. B. O. Res. Sec.*, Vol. XVII, pp. 1 ff.

4. *Ep. Ind.*, Vol. XXVIII, p. 323.

5. *Ibid.*, Vol. XXIX, p. 107.

*kacchapa* (4) *sa-viṣṭap-īraṇya*, (5) *sa-nidhi*, (6) *s-ṣpanidhi*, (7) *s-ṣmra-madhu-van-ākirṇa*, (8) *go-gauḍa-sameta* (together with the cows and milkman or with taxes on pasture land and milkmen), and (9) *sa-khaṇḍapālīya* (together with the tax for the maintenance of swordsmen), the following list of taxes to be levied in future : (1) *suvarṇadaṇḍa* (profession tax on goldsmiths), (2) *ahi-daṇḍa*, (3) *varṇma-daṇḍa* (transit duties), (4) *vanāpanā* (occasional offering of money or presents), (5) *vijaya-vandāpanā*, (6) *tṛṇodaka* (tax for grazing and watering cattle), (7) *śāsan-ārdhika* (levy of an additional share of the produce from the tenants engaged in cultivating rent-free lands), (8) *varabalivarda*, (9) *arthāruvā*, (10) *pratyarthāruvā*, (11) *padāṭijīvya*, (12) *ādattā* (13) *āturā-vaddi*, etc. While the names of the above taxes exhibit, in many cases, the influence of Oriya, the Siddheswar inscription mentions the following levies under their Oriya names : (1) *ohoru* (the same as *daṇḍoḍāsi-ohora* of another record, meaning the tax for the maintenance of watchmen), (2) *pāukā* (the same as Oriyā *pāuseri*, a levy on the money realised by the creditors from the debtors ; cf. *pratyarthāruvā*), (3) *pāikā* (the same as Oriyā *pāikālī* and Sanskrit *padāṭijīva* or *padāṭijīvya*), (4) *bhēṭa* (the same as *vandāpanā*), (5) *vodā* (the same as Oriyā *vadāi*, occasional offering of uncooked food) and (6) *paridarśanā* (probably, a supervision tax, the nature of which is uncertain though it may refer to the partition of land or property). Along with *tṛṇodaka* and *khaṇḍapālīya* (the same as *khaṇḍapālīya*), sometimes a levy called *muṇḍa-mola* is mentioned in Orissan records, and this reminds us of Marāṭhī *muṇḍabandī* meaning a collective rate of rent for land partitioned among cultivators.<sup>1</sup>

We have discussed above a number of privileges which were often granted or sold to landlords and tenants by the State. They indirectly point to the State's exactions from the subjects and indicate the great pressure of taxes and obligations on the ordinary tenants. Besides the taxes referred to in the privileges discussed by us, many more are noticed in the epigraphic records of different parts of India.<sup>2</sup>

1. Cf. Sircar, *Indian Epigraphy*, pp. 111, 401.

2. Many of them are discussed in my *Indian Epigraphical Glossary*.



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